THE PEAK IN DARIEN,

WITH SOME OTHER INQUIRIES

TOUCHING CONCERNS OF THE SOUL AND THE BODY.

BY

Frances Power Cobbe.

"Das Leben ist der Güter höchstes nicht;
Der Uebel grösstes aber ist die Schuld."
Die Braut von Messina.

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PREFACE.

My last little book, "Lectures on the Duties of Women," was addressed principally to the young of my own sex. The present volume is intended for my contemporaries who are daily brought face to face with some of the darker problems of the time, or are led by their advancing years to ponder ever more earnestly on the mystery of the great Transition. In these various papers—some new, some already published in different periodicals—I have striven to meet fairly the questions: Whether the denial of God and Immortality be indeed (as Agnostics and Comtists are wont to boast), a "Magnanimous" creed? Whether Life be truly (as Leopardi and Schopenhauer and hundreds of their English disciples din daily in our ears), a burden and a curse? and Whether (as much recent legislation and newspaper literature would seem to teach), Bodily Health be, after all, the *summum bonum* for which personal freedom, courage, humanity and purity ought all to be sacrificed?

To these discussions I have added one on the Fitness of Women for the Ministry of Religion, —a subject, I believe, destined soon to acquire importance,—with two or three less serious papers on other matters touching moral questions; and, in conclusion, I have returned to a speculation concerning the immediate entry into the Life after Death which I find has possessed interest for many readers. That "Peak in Darien," which we must all ascend in our turn,—the apex of two worlds, whence the soul may possibly descry the horizonless Pacific of eternity,—is the turning-point of human hope; and it appears to me infinitely strange that so little attention has been paid to the cases wherein indications seem to have been given of the perception by the dying of blessed Presences revealed to them even as the veil of flesh has dropped away. Were I permitted to record, with names and references, half the instances of this occurrence which have been narrated to me, this short essay might have been swelled to a volume. It is my wish, however, that it should serve to suggest observation and provoke the interchange of experiences, rather than be considered as pretending to decide affirmatively the question wherewith it deals.

Perhaps it may be as well to forestall any misapprehension by stating plainly that I utterly disbelieve, and even regard with intense dislike,

all so-called "Spiritualist" manifestations and attempts to recall the dead;—and that I have never found any sufficient testimony for stories of ghosts or apparitions of the departed beheld by men and women still in the midst of life. Only at the very moment when we are passing into their arms does it seem to me that the law of our being may permit us to recognize once more the beloved ones who are "not lost but gone before." The lines of W. J. Fox precisely express my thought on this subject—

> Call them from the dead!
> Vain the call must be—
> But the hand of Death shall lay
> Like that of Christ its healing clay
> On eyes which then shall see—
> That glorious company.

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

July, 1882.

MAGNANIMOUS ATHEISM.

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"Be of good cheer, brother!" said John Bradford to his fellow-martyr while the faggots were kindling; "we shall have a brave supper in Heaven with the Lord to-night!" "Be of good cheer, everybody!" cry an army of modern confessors, seated in library chairs; "there is no Heaven and no Lord, and when we die there will be an end of us all, *in sæcula sæculorum;* but the generations who come after us will be greatly edified by our beautiful books and our instructive example."

Perhaps the moral vitality of our age is in no way better exemplified than by the fact that certain doubts which seem to strike mortal blows at the head and heart of human virtue, yet leave it breathing, and even pulsating with aspirations after some yet loftier excellence than saints and heroes have hitherto

attained. To look back to the "infidels" with whom Massillon and Jeremy Taylor had to do, and compare them with the Agnostics of our time, is indeed more encouraging than to compare the "faithful" of past centuries with those of the present age. While the old Atheist sheltered his vice behind a rampart of unbelief where no appeals could reach him, the new Agnostic honestly maintains that his opinions are the very best foundations of virtue. No one can for a moment say of him that he chooses darkness rather than light *because* his deeds are evil. If it be (as we think) darkness which he has chosen, there can be no question that his deeds are good; and that his conceptions of Duty are truly elevated and far-reaching, and enforced by every argument which he has left himself at liberty to use. Renouncing faith in God and in the life hereafter—that is to say, in *Goodness Infinite* and *Goodness Immortalized*—he retains the most fervent faith in Goodness as developed in human life—that is to say, in *Goodness Finite* in degree and in duration. If we are to accept his own statement of the case, the Agnostic has completely

turned the front of the theological battle. It is now the Pagans who have seized and hold aloft the sacred Labarum of Duty and Self-sacrifice, and *in hoc signo* are destined to victory.

The claim is one of the gravest which can be put forth between man and man. It was not easy—it was, alas! often beyond our strength—to combat our doubts or those of others, while yet we fought against them as a sailor fights against enemies cutting his anchor cable on a stormy night. We stand amazed and disarmed by the strange intelligence that, when these doubts have done their work, and cast us adrift altogether from allegiance to God and hope of another life, *then*, when all seems lost, we shall suddenly discover that we have touched the Fortunate Isles of virtue and peace. Only the thorough sceptic, we are assured, can be the perfect saint. Nobody can disinterestedly serve his brother on earth till he is entirely persuaded he has no Father in heaven. The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge (of course it is always assumed that it *is* a tree of genuine knowledge on which Atheism grows) is to be desired, not only

because it will make us "wise," but because it will make us *good*. Who will hesitate any more to pluck and eat?

To the consideration of this now common pretension of Agnosticism to be the true FRIEND OF VIRTUE, in the room of the old delusion of Religion, the following pages will be devoted. For the purposes of our particular argument, and to avoid entangling ourselves with too many collateral questions, I shall treat it here as the *Assumption of the Moral Superiority of Atheism over Theism*. Is that assumption justifiable? I, for one, am entirely ready to admit that *if* there be anything in the faith in God and immortality which detracts from the highest conceivable perfection of human virtue—if, in short, Atheism have a better morality to teach than Theism—then the case of Theism must be abandoned. The religion which is *not* the holiest conceivable by the man who holds it is condemned *ipso facto*.

For the present I may assume that no important difference of opinion exists as to the practical Rules of morality. It is the proper *motives* to a virtuous and self-sacrificing

life which Agnostics claim to place on higher ground than that which has been hitherto given to them. They propose to tell us to "do justice and love mercy" both in a better and more disinterested way than while we added to those unquestionable duties the mistaken attempt to walk humbly with our God. The question lies in a nutshell—Can they do it? Is there anything in the true Theistic faith detracting from the disinterestedness of virtue, or calculated to rob it of a single ray of purity and glory? This must be our first contention, since Religion now stands on its defence as a basis of morality. When it is settled, it may perhaps appear that Religion may justly again assume the offensive, and challenge Atheism to prove its capacity for serving equally efficiently as a support for the virtue of humanity; and, if it appear that to such a challenge no satisfactory reply can be given, then it will be manifest that, in their expressions of satisfaction and joy at the anticipated downfall of religion, Atheists display disregard of the moral interests of their race.

Let the lists be cleared in the first place.

I shall not be expected to defend all the base and demoralizing things which, in the misused name of Christianity, have been inculcated concering "Other-worldliness;" the doing good for the sake of getting to heaven, and avoiding evil from fear of hell. Since the day, recorded by Joinville, when the mysterious old woman carried her waterpot and torch before St. Louis, and told him she intended to put out the fires of hell and burn up heaven, so that men might learn to love God for his own sake, and not from fear or hope—since that distant time there have not been wanting righteous souls who have girned and spurned at the vile lessons current in the Churches, and asked with Kingsley :

> Is Selfishness—for Time, a sin—stretched out into eternity,
> Celestial Prudence?

Beyond a doubt, one of the heaviest charges against the popular creed is, that while its ministers have raged against the smallest theological error, and convulsed the world by their ridiculous disputes concerning mysteries altogether beyond the reach of human comprehension, they have complacently endured

and even fostered moral heresies which withered up the very roots of virtue. The whole tone of ordinary Romish exhortation to *faire son salut* is often base beyond expression, and the teaching of the Church of England in the last century was no better. Here are some specimens of it. Rutherford says ("Nature and Obligations of Virtue," 1744): "Every man's happiness is the ultimate end which reason teaches him to pursue, and the constant and uniform practice of virtue becomes our duty *when* Revelation has informed us that God will make us finally happy in a life after this." Paley is no better. He says:* "Virtue is the doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God and *for the sake of everlasting happiness*. According to which definition, the good of mankind is the subject, the will of God the rule, and *everlasting happiness the motive of virtue*." Waterland, the great champion of Trinitarianism, went even further. He says, that "being just and grateful without future prospects, has as much of moral virtue in it *as folly or indiscretion has*." These are the kind of doctrines which have been

* "Moral Phil.," B. I, c. vii.

placidly admitted among the recognized teachings of the great Christian Churches. Nor have some of the philosophers proved a whit more conscious of the meaning of the simple notion of Duty. Bentham, for example,* plainly lays it down that for a man to give up a larger pleasure of his own for a smaller one of his neighbour's, is an act, not of virtue, but of *folly*.

Certainly if the new Agnostics had no types of religion or morality save these thoroughly debased ones wherewith to compare their system, they might well claim to be the evangelists of a purer gospel. Better, assuredly better, would it be to believe in no God, than to pay homage to the all-adorable Author of Good for the sake of the payment we expect Him to give us. Better, assuredly better, to expect no life beyond the grave, than to poison every act of courage, justice or beneficence, by the vile notion of being rewarded for it in heaven; or to refrain from treachery and cruelty and lies, merely, like a beaten hound, from dread of the bloody scourge of hell.

But it would be an insult to the well-

* "Deontology," p. 191.

informed and widely-read advocates of Agnosticism, if we were to assume for a moment that they were ignorant that this base alloy of religion has been almost universally repudiated by the higher class of English divines of the present day, of every shade of orthodoxy; while outside of the churches there is not a religious man who does not regard them with unmitigated disgust. The question really is, not whether religion *may* be made to corrupt morality with bribes and threats, but whether it properly does so; whether a religious man *ought*, in accordance with his theology, to be less disinterested than an Atheist? To reply to this question, it seems only necessary to recal what a Theist believes about God and Immortality as concerned with his own virtue.

A Theist believes, then, that the goodness and justice which the Agnostic recognizes and loves so well in their human manifestations, have existence beyond humanity, and are carried to ideal perfection in a Being who is, in some sense, the Soul and Ruler of the universe.

This belief, at all events (whether legitimately held or only a dream), cannot, I pre-

sume, so far as it goes, be charged with detracting from the purity of virtue. Goodness cannot be esteemed less good, or justice less just, because there exists One who is supremely good and just.

Further, as regards himself, the Theist believes that this supremely good and just Being so constituted his nature and the world around him, as that the law of goodness and justice should be *known* to him as the sacred rule whereby he is inwardly bound to determine his actions and sentiments. In other words, he believes that he has acquired his moral sense from God, and not from any undesigned, fortuitous order of things which may have impressed it as an hereditary idea on his brain.

I am at a loss to guess how *this* step further can be supposed to be hostile to the disinterestedness of virtue. It is easy to see how the opposite theory of the origin of conscience, as exhibited in Mr. Darwin's "Descent of Man," —whereby the authority of the human intuition, "Thou shalt do no murder," is traced to the same origin as the bees' intuition of the duty of killing their brothers the drones

(namely, the hereditary transmission of ideas found conducive to the welfare of the tribe),—should dethrone Conscience from her assumed supremacy, and place her among the crowd of other hereditary notions, neither more nor less deserving of honour. And, on the other hand, the attribution of our moral ideas directly or indirectly to the teaching of a Being immeasurably above us,—a theory which represents Conscience as a ray shot downwards from a Sun, instead of a marsh-fire illumined under special conditions of social existence, and liable to blaze up, die down, or flit hither and thither as they may determine,—must inevitably elevate and sanctify the laws of morals to our apprehension. In truth, it is obvious that, had the first hypothesis (of the hereditary transmission of useful ideas) been heard of in the days of our ancestors, the "mystic extension" (as Mr. Mill calls it) of Utility into Morality could never have been accomplished, and Repentance and Remorse would have been unknown experiences. But all this refers to the practical *authority* of moral laws. It is with the *disinterestedness* of the man who obeys them that we are at

present concerned; and this disinterestedness is not, that I perceive, influenced one way or the other by the theory he may hold of how he comes by his knowledge of them.

But now we reach the point where it is to be presumed the Atheist finds ground for his claim to superior disinterestedness. The Theist believes not only that Goodness and Justice are attributes of God, and that God has taught him to be good and just, but that God further holds what the old schoolmen called the *Justitia Rectoria* of the universe,—that He so ordains things as that, sooner or later, good will surely befal the good, and evil the evil. So much as this is included in the simplest elements of Theism. In its fuller development, Theism teaches more; namely, that God takes the interest of a Father in the moral welfare of His children; that He has created every human soul (and doubtless thousands of races of other intelligent beings) for the express purpose that each should attain, through the teaching and trials of existence, to virtue, and so enter into the supreme bliss of sympathy and communion with Himself. Theism, thus understood,

teaches that God is perpetually training each soul for that sublime end, inspiring it with light, answering its prayers for spiritual aid, punishing it for its errors, hedging up its way with thorns to prevent its wanderings, and, finally, certainly conducting it, through this life, and perhaps many lives to come, to the holiness and blessedness for which it was made.

The position of a Theist differs therefore essentially from that of an Atheist as regards the practice of virtue, inasmuch as the Atheist thinks he has no superhuman spectator or sympathizer; that the thoughts and feelings which awaken his conscience and move his heart do not originate in any mind out of his own; that the woes of his life bear with them no moral meaning of retribution or expiation; and, finally, that whether he be a hero or a coward, a saint or a sinner, it will be all one, so far as himself is concerned, when the hour of his death has sounded. His actions may and will have important consequences to other men, but as regards his own destiny they can have no consequences at all, for the grave will receive everything that remains of him. The virtues he may have acquired with unutterable

struggles will die away into nothingness, like the sound of a broken harp-string. He will neither rejoin his dead friends, or come into any fresh consciousness of God. Neither dead friends nor God have any existence; and a little sooner or later, as he may chance to be a more or less important person, he will be altogether forgotten, and no being in the universe will ever more remember that he once *was*.

Now I think it would be idle to deny that it must be *far harder* to be virtuous under the shadow of this Atheism than in the sunshine of Theism. The tax and strain upon the moral nature of a man who holds the views just indicated of the emptiness of the universe of any One absolutely good and just, of the low and haphazard origin of conscience, and of the utter loneliness and unaided state wherewith man pursues his weary course from the cradle to the inevitable, eternal grave —must be simply enormous. All honour, sincere and hearty honour, and full recognition of their noble disinterestedness, be to those Atheists who under such strain yet struggle successfully and incessantly to do good and

not evil all their days, and to die bravely and calmly, letting go their grasp of life and joy and love, and sinking without a groan under the waters which are to cover them for evermore. There is something in the self-sustained, Promethean courage of such a man which commands our admiration; and we can well imagine him looking round on his suffering fellows pitifully, as on his orphaned and disinherited brothers and sisters, with infinite compassion, deeming them destined like himself to perish with all their aspirations and capacities disappointed and unfulfilled. For such a man to devote himself to the labours of practical benevolence, and the relief of the woe which surrounds him, from whence he usually draws his strongest arguments for his desolate creed, would seem to be the fittest, if not the only fit pursuit; and when we behold him engaged in it (as in instances I could readily name), our whole hearts recognize his virtue as absolutely beautiful and disinterested. But because the Atheist's virtue, when he is virtuous, is without alloy, is there any just reason to hold that it is *more* pure than that of the Theist? His task is, as I have readily

admitted, the *harder* of the two; *so* hard indeed is it, that there seem the gravest reasons for fearing that, if a few noble spirits perform it, the mass of tried and tempted men who can scarcely lift themselves from their selfishness even with the two wings of Faith and Hope, will lie prone in the very mire of vice when those wings are broken. But because the Atheist's duty is harder to do, is it consequently better done? Is the music which he draws from that one string of philanthropy, sweeter than the full chord of all the religious and social affections together?

Let us revert to the points of difference between the two creeds as above enumerated. Is a man necessarily *self-interested* in doing the will of a Being whom he *loves*, and hopes by serving to approach and resemble? Of course if he is looking for payment,—for health, wealth, happiness on earth, or celestial glory,—for any adventitious reward outside of the fact of becoming better and nearer to God,—then, indeed, his service is self-interested. He is a mercenary in the army of martyrs. In strict ethics, his conduct, however exactly legal, is not virtuous, for virtue

can only be absolutely without side-looks to contingent profit, present or future. I presume that when Agnostics boast of the superior disinterestedness of the virtue they inculcate over that of religious men, they think (and cannot divest themselves of the early acquired habit of thinking) of religion as of this kind of labour-and-wages system—hard duty below, high glory above—with perhaps the additional complication of certain scholastic doctrines of Imputed Righteousness. But it is time this confusion should cease. Love of goodness *impersonated in God* is not a less disinterested, though naturally a more fervent, sentiment than love of goodness in the abstract. The Theist, in his attempt to obey by good deeds the will of the Being he loves, acts as simply as the Atheist, who loves the good deed, thinking that no being higher in the scale of existence than himself has any appreciation of the difference between good and evil. The Theist, indeed, adds to his love of goodness *per se*, a love of goodness impersonated in God, who desires good actions to be done,* and possibly also a hope that,

* Miss Martineau says: "I saw with the pain of

by doing good now, he may be given the power to do it again and again for ever; but it is all the same charmed circle of *doing good for goodness' sake*, out of which he never emerges into any such motive as doing good for the sake of honour, prosperity, or heavenly bliss in a golden city. The sole thing which the Theist asks of God as the reward of obedience is, the power to obey better in future, the privilege of obeying for ever. The payment of his virtue is, to be virtuous now and throughout eternity. Whether it be in this life or another, there is no difference; no new principle comes into play; no bribe unsought for here is hoped for there. He says to God: "It is a joy to serve Thee, but infinitely greater is the joy to serve Thee with the assurance that the term of my service will

disgust how much lower a thing it is to lead even the loftiest life from a regard to the will or mind of any other being than from a natural working out of our own powers" ("Autobiography," Vol. II). I must humbly confess I have not come yet to see anything of the kind. Provided that the Being to whose Will we have regard is Supreme Goodness itself, it seems to me infinitely *higher* to strive to assimilate our will to His than to "work out our own powers."

never expire. Precious is the privilege of calling Thee Father. How glad then am I that I shall be a child at Thy feet for ever! Lord, I seek no heaven hereafter. I covet no abode of bliss, no outward reward above. To be with Thee is my heaven and my salvation, and the only reward I seek. As I abide in Thee now, may I continue to live in Thee, O Father; and to grow in wisdom and love and purity and joy in Thee, time without end."*

Surely it is altogether absurd to speak of this Religion as involving any, even the very slightest shade of interestedness, or detraction from the highest conceivable type of human virtue? If it deserve such a condemnation, then must likewise stand condemned the most pure and exalted human love which friend has ever felt for friend—for this also, by its very nature, seeks to serve for love's sake; to arrive at perfect harmony; to dwell with the beloved in unbroken and everlasting union.

Turn we now to the other side of the subject. Theism has been, I hope, vindicated from the charge of interestedness. What shall we say to the general ethical aspect of Agnos-

* "Alone to the Alone," p. 110, 3rd edit.

tieism, which assumes to be the nobler system? Admitting the blameless conduct and the high aspirations of some of its professors, what value shall we attach to their claim to be the heralds of a higher morality?

If I may, without offence, condense their lessons in a very obvious parallel, they amount to this "symbol:"—"Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he cease to believe either in One God or in three; and that he be fully assured that those who have done good, and those who have done evil, shall alike go into everlasting nothingness." This creed piously accepted, he will advance to perfection, and outrun in two ways any excellence which has been hitherto attained.

1st. While recognizing that, so far as he himself is concerned, Death means the annihilation of consciousness, he will act throughout his life with a deep and conscientious concern for the consequences of his actions to those who come after him, or—as Mr. Frederick Harrison expresses it—to his own posthumous activity.

2nd. By welcoming the conclusions of Atheism, and especially the doctrine of the

annihilation of consciousness at death, not as a sorrowful truth, but as the latest and brightest Gospel of good tidings; and proclaiming on all suitable occasions that they afford a better standpoint and outlook for humanity than any faith or hope which has been hitherto entertained.

The first of these doctrines was set forth a few years ago in two eloquent and affecting papers by Mr. Frederick Harrison in the *Nineteenth Century*. How much sympathy I feel with a great deal which is said in these papers,* how sincerely I respect Mr. Harrison's

* *E.g.*, the following passage, which deserves to be reprinted a hundred times, *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1877, p. 832:—"We entirely agree with the theologians that our age is beset with a grievous danger of materialism. There is a school of teachers abroad, and they have found an echo here, who dream that victorious vivisection will ultimately win them anatomical solutions of man's moral and spiritual mysteries. Such unholy nightmares, it is true, are not likely to beguile many minds in a country like this, where social and moral problems are still in their natural ascendant. But there is a subtler kind of materialism of which the dangers are real. It does not indeed put forth the bestial sophism that the apex of philosophy is to be won by improved microscopes and new batteries. But then it has nothing to say about the spiritual life of

noble conception of the aim of life, even where I most completely misdoubt the validity of the method he proposes for attaining it, there is scarcely need to say. It is precisely because such Positivists as he and Mr. Morley and the late George Eliot, and such Agnostics as many I could name, assume such really high ground in their teaching, and appeal (though, as I think, in a fallacious way) to our very noblest sympathies and aspirations, that I feel urged to raise my feeble voice and call in question their guidance. There, in truth, stand, as they point to them, the snowy summits of purity and goodness. But by what path would they guide us to ascend them? Even if their own

men. It fills the air with pæans to science, but it always means physical, not moral science. It shirks the question of questions,—To what human end is this knowledge? How shall man thereby order his life as a whole? Where is he to find the object of the yearnings of his spirit?"

I am not concerned to defend the orthodox ideal of Heaven against Mr. Harrison's strictures, but I cannot help entering a protest against his sneer at the "eternity of the tabor" as "so gross, so sensual a creed." It seems to me it errs by an excessive and unreal spirituality. It was certainly not a "gross" or "sensual" order of mind which deemed the act of *adoration* to be one wherein man could spend an eternity of ecstasy.

strong souls may climb those arid crags, can they be in any possible sense a better way than that by which millions of believers in God and Immortality have gone up on high?

Let us take Mr. Harrison's doctrine of the "Posthumous Activities" of the soul, and endeavour to estimate how far it is calculated to act as an efficient motive of virtue on ordinarily constituted, well-intentioned men and women. We must bear in mind that it is formally proposed as a substitute for the old belief in the immortality of the individual—that is (according to the Theist creed), in the immortality of the *virtue* of the individual. While a Theist believes that, having lighted that sacred torch, he shall be permitted to bear it onward, burning more purely and brightly for ever, the Comtist thinks he must lay down his at the side of his grave, though other men may ignite their own from it, and so carry on its light from age to age.

In the first place I must remark, that, like the promise on which such stress is laid in Dr. Bridges' "General View of Positivism"—that attached husbands and wives may be

solemnly interred side by side—there is nothing *new* in these anticipations. We have always known that we might be buried in the same vault with our next friend, as we have always known that our actions would continue to bear fruit after our departure. We entertained the first hope (so far as such a pitiful matter as the future position of our deaf and blind, decaying dust deserves to be considered a hope), and we were aware of the responsibility,—*plus* the belief that we ourselves should enjoy free converse with the spirit of our friend, and afford to smile together on our poor moulder-ing garments laid up side by side in the tomb, —and *plus* the belief that we might ourselves be cognizant of our posthumous activities. There is nothing in the fact that both the hope and the sense of responsibility must now stand by themselves for what they are worth, to give them (so far as I can see) any fresh leverage as motives of conduct. People who did not love each other better while they expected to be at liberty to spend eternity in conscious communion, as well as to be buried in the same grave, certainly will not love each

other better when their future prospects are limited to the family vault. And people who have not regulated their conduct with a view to their post-mortem influence while they anticipated to be living somewhere to know, or, at all events, to be obliged to think, about it, are very little likely to regulate it the better when they are convinced that, if they leave the Deluge behind them, they will neither know nor care one iota. As to the good man, he will, under the old creed and under the new alike (and neither more nor less, so far as I can perceive), entertain a solemn sense of a responsibility to do all the good and refrain from every evil in his power during his three-score years and ten, *not* first, or chiefly, for the sake of consequences near or remote to himself or other people in this world or another, but because goodness, truth, courage, justice and generosity, are good in themselves, lovable in his eyes and in the eyes of God, and falsehood, impurity, cruelty and treachery, are bad and despicable, hateful to him and to his Maker. Afterwards, and as a reinforcement of his choice of Scipio, he will reflect that every good act entails good consequences in

widening circles of loving-kindness, honour and honesty, and every bad one the reverse; and he will hope in dying to reflect that the sum of the influence he leaves to work after him will be wholly on the side of truth, justice and love. It is monstrous for Mr. Harrison to say that "the difference between our (Positivist) faith and that of the orthodox is this. *We* look to the permanence of the activities which give others happiness. *They* look to the permanence of the consciousness which can enjoy happiness." Why should looking to the permanence of consciousness and happiness make a man care less for the activities "which give others happiness"? Does A care less for B's welfare because he would like to be alive to see it, or even alive at the Antipodes at the same time?

Moralists and divines of all ages have not overlooked the remoter consequences of our actions in rehearsing the motives in favour of virtue. But it is idle to attach to it, as applied to the bulk of mankind, more practical force than it possesses. In the first place, when such an observer of things as Shakespeare could

"The evil which men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;"

it is open to us all to doubt whether some of the very noblest achievements of human virtue have left any other mark than on the virtuous souls themselves, which (as we Theists think) enjoy even now in a higher existence their blessed inward consequences. The martyrs who perished unseen and unknown in the loathsome dungeons and amid the protracted tortures of the Inquisition in Spain, where the Reformation they would have established was absolutely extinguished and left no ray of light behind—could these men cheer themselves under the awful strain of their agonies by a motive of such tenuity as the prospect of their "posthumous activities"?

But admitting, for argument sake, that the motive would serve always to support the heroic order of virtues, would it likewise aid the still more important ones of every-day conduct? His own illustrations ought surely to have made Mr. Harrison pause before he assumed it. He speaks of Newton as "no longer destroying his great name by feeble theology or querulous pettiness"—of Shakespeare as "the boon companion and retired

playwright of Stratford"—of Dante as the "querulous refugee from Florence" and of Milton as "the blind and stern old malignant of Bunhill Fields." Now these are his chosen exemplars of the enormous "posthumous activity" which a man may exert, and certainly nobody now living can hope that he shall ever exercise one-tenth as much. But *their* "pettiness" and "querulousness" and "boon companionship" and "sternness" in their lifetimes did not hinder, or even essentially detract from, their stupendous "posthumous activity." Why, then, should lesser people have any scruple in being petty, querulous or stern, or indulging in pot-companionship, or any other faults of temper or habit, on account of their little posthumous activities, whatever they may hope that these may prove?

Obviously, Mr. Harrison has a misgiving as to the force which his argument can be expected to exert on ordinary mortals, or for the daily purposes of life. Though he says that the truth he teaches "is not confined to the great," and adds the beautiful remark that "in some infinitesimal degree the humblest life that ever turned a sod sends a wave—no,

more than a wave, a life—through the ever-growing harmony of human society;" yet even while he alleges that a concern for such posthumous activity is "no doubt now in England the great motive of virtue and energy," and asks, "Can we conceive a more potent stimulus to daily and hourly striving after a true life?" *—he says in the next page, that "it would be an endless inquiry to trace the means whereby this sense of posthumous participation in the life of our fellows *can be extended to the mass*, as it certainly affects already the thoughtful and refined." Honestly he admits that it is "impossible it should become universal and capable of overcoming selfishness" "without an education, a new social opinion without a religion; I mean an organized religion, not a vague metaphysic." "Make it," he cries, with almost the enthusiasm of a discoverer, "at once the basis of philosophy, the standard of right and wrong, and the centre of a religion," and then it may perhaps be achieved.

But, in sober truth, what "education" or "organized religion" (*i.e.*, of course, Comtism)

* Pp. 838, 839.

can possibly transform this remote anticipation of the results of our actions after we are dead into a practical lever for daily duty for the great bulk of mankind? It is the speciality of all vice to be selfishly indifferent to the injurious consequences of our actions, even to their immediate and visible consequences, to those nearest to us. Is it not almost ludicrous to think of exhorting the drunkard who sees his wife and children starving round him to-day, or the ill-conducted girl who is breaking her mother's heart, or the hard task-master or landlord who is grinding the faces of the poor to fill his pocket—to refrain from their misdoings on account of the evil which they will cause fifty years hence to people unborn? Or let us try to apply the principle to that sound mass of every-day English virtue which is, after all, the very air we breathe—the daily dutifulness, the purity, the truthfulness, the loving-kindness of our homes, the beautiful patience to be witnessed beside a thousand sick beds. Were we to ask the simple-hearted men and meek women who exemplify these virtues whether they ever think of the excellent "posthumous

activities" which they will exert on their surviving acquaintances, would they not be utterly bewildered? The clergyman (or let us have the Comtist philosopher) who will go through a workhouse ward, or round the cottages of a village, and offer such a suggestion as a topic of encouragement, would, I think, effect a very small measure of reformation. Nor do I think it is necessarily a low type of mind which does not project itself much into the future, whether in this world or the next; but which is vividly affected by the idea of a *present* righteous law claiming immediate obedience, and a *present* adorable God watching whether that obedience be paid, but which takes in even the idea of Immortality more as adding an infinite dignity to moral things and human souls, than as a direct motive to moral action. To such a person, the promise of "posthumous activities" is as remote and inoperative a principle as it is possible to propose; and he can scarcely help smiling at it, as he does at the observation of Pliny, that the "happiest of all possible anticipations is the certain expectation of an honourable and undying renown." Posthumous Activity

affords a far nobler motive than posthumous Fame, but they both appeal to sentiments which have little weight with the majority of minds, and no weight at all with a great number not undeserving of respect.

The truth seems to be that the leading Comtists and Agnostics of the day not only belong to an exceptional type of human nature, little touched by grosser impulses, and highly sensitive to the most rarefied order of influences, but are unable to descend from such altitude, and realize what ordinary flesh and blood men and women are made of. As Mr. Darwin unconsciously betrayed that he had never once had occasion to repent an act of unkindness, when he theorized about Repentance as *beginning* by a spontaneous reversion to sympathy and goodwill to the people we have injured (in bold contradiction to Tacitus' too true maxim, "*Humani generis proprium est odisse quem læseris*"), so the disciples of Comte unwittingly allow us to perceive that they really consider an exalted and far-reaching interest in the welfare of our kind as the sort of motive which is already "now in England the great motive of virtue and energy."

Let me explain myself. I do not think there is any precept too high to be accepted by the mass of mankind; nay, I think that the higher, nobler, more self-sacrificing the lesson, the warmer response it will draw forth from the heart of humanity. But this is the *moral* excellence of the precept, the loftiness of the purity, the nobleness of the generosity, the courageousness of the self-devotion, which are demanded. It is quite another thing to choose to present, as the proper motive of daily virtue, an idea requiring a trained *intellect* to take it in, and a vivid *imagination* to realize it. Every argument for virtue, for sobriety, veracity and so on, drawn from considerations of future consequences, labours under this irremediable defect; *that it appeals least to those whom it is most necessary to influence.* When we go further, and place our fulcrum of moral leverage in the period after the death of the man to whom we appeal, and candidly tell him that he will neither enjoy the sight of any good he may have effected, nor suffer from the spectacle of the results of his wrong-doing, we have reached (as it seems to me) the *ne plus ultra* of

impracticability. Woe to human virtue when its advocates are driven to attach primary importance to such an argument, and dream it can be made "the centre of a religion!"

To sum up this subject. To a man of high calibre and gifts, the consideration of "posthumous activities" may act as a spur to doing great actions, but scarcely as a motive to regulate his daily life and temper. He will perhaps under its influence reform the prisons of Europe, and at the same time break his wife's heart; write a great epic poem, and treat his daughters like slaves; paint splendid pictures, and remain a selfish and sordid miser; fight heroically his country's battles, and lead a life of persistent adultery; be at once a disinterested statesman in a corrupt age, and an habitual drunkard.

As to the mass of mankind, who are endowed neither with any superior gifts to employ, nor vivid imagination to realize the results of their actions hereafter, an appeal to them to act virtuously in consideration of their posthumous activities would draw forth some such reply as this: "Our conduct can at most leave after our deaths only very small

results on a very few people whom we shall never know. We find it hard enough to make sacrifices for those whom we do know and love, and whose happiness or misery we actually witness. It is asking too much of us that, for remote, contingent and evanescent benefits to our survivors, we should undergo any pain or labour, or renounce any of the pleasures which in our poor short lives (so soon to end for ever in darkness) may fall within our grasp."

Thus in its capacity of the *Friend of Virtue*, it seems that Atheism begins by depriving Virtue of some of the strongest, if not the very strongest, motives by which it has hitherto been supported, and offers in their room, as the best substitute for them and the future "centre of religion," a consideration of Posthumous Activities whose force is of necessity both partial as to the virtues it inculcates, and extremely limited as to the persons over whom it can exercise any influence. And *that* force, such as it is, appears to be in no way specially connected with the Atheistic view of human destiny,

but belongs to every moral system in the world!

Finally, as if to complete the nullity of the motive of Posthumous Activities, there comes a reflection, which must take ere long a prominent place in disquisitions of this kind. Comtists talk of the "immortality," the "eternity," of a dead man's influence. But if each individual human soul is destined to be extinguished at death, then there is *nothing* wherewith man is concerned which is immortal or eternal. Our race is destined irretrievably to perish *as a race*, if it perish piecemeal with every soul which drops into the grave. Miss Martineau's wild talk about "the special destination of my race" being "infinitely nobler than the highest proposed under a scheme of Divine Moral Government"* (an assertion in itself simply absurd, since the believers in a scheme of Divine Government hold that whatever *is* noblest is *by the hypothesis* assuredly our destination), is rendered doubly preposterous when we bear

* "Autobiography," Vol. II, p. 356.

in mind what Science teaches regarding the inevitable lapse of this planet within a limited epoch into a condition of uninhabitability. The following observations are made on this subject in a little *jeu d'esprit* which I may be pardoned for quoting. It assumes to be an extract from a newspaper of the next century, and the men of that period are supposed to look back upon the doctrine of "Posthumous Activities" with very little respect:—

"It is needless to repeat that the delusive exhortations of some amiable but short-sighted philosophers of the last century to 'labour for the good of Humanity in future generations' (a motive which they supposed would prove a substitute for the old Historic Religions) have been once and for all answered by the grand discovery of astronomers that our planet cannot long remain the habitation of man (even if it escape any sidereal explosion), since the Solar heat is undergoing such rapid exhaustion. When the day comes—as come it must—when the fruits of the earth perish one by one, when the dead and silent woods petrify, and all the races of animals become extinct—when the icy seas flow no longer, and the pallid Sun shines dimly over the frozen world, locked, like the Moon, in eternal frost and lifelessness—what, in that day, predicted so surely by Science, will avail all the works, and hopes, and martyrdoms of man? All the stores of knowledge which we shall have accumulated will be for ever lost. Our discoveries, whereby we have become the lords of

creation and wielded the great forces of Nature, will be useless and forgotten. The virtues which have been perfected, the genius which has glorified, the love which has blessed the human race, will all perish along with it. Our libraries of books, our galleries of pictures, our fleets, our railroads, our vast and busy cities, will be desolate and useless for evermore. No intelligent eye will ever behold them; and no eye in the universe will know or remember that there ever existed such a being as Man. *This* is what SCIENCE teaches us unerringly to expect—and in view of it, who shall talk to us of 'laboring for the sake of Humanity'? The enthusiasm which could work disinterestedly for a Progress destined inevitably to end in an eternal Glacial Period must be recognized as a dream, wherein no man in a Scientific Age can long indulge."*

The second counsel of perfection of the Agnostic teachers is, as above said, "to welcome the conclusions of Atheism, and especially the doctrine of annihilation of consciousness at death, not merely as truth, but as the latest gospel of good tidings."

This lesson, though repeated more or less by nearly all Agnostic and Comtist writers, has been perhaps most prominently brought to the front in the Life of Harriet Martineau. I shall take her observations and example as the text for the remarks I wish to offer upon

* "Age of Science," p. 49.

it, as I have done the papers of Mr. Frederick Harrison for those just made on the doctrine of Posthumous Activities. These are some of her utterances which touch on the matter:—

"I soon found myself quite outside of my old world of thought and speculation, under a new heaven and a new earth, disembarrassed of a load of selfish cares and troubles. Hence it followed that the conceptions of a God with any human attributes whatever, of a principle or practice of Design, of an administration of the affairs of the world by the principles of human morals, must be mere visions, necessary and useful in their day, but not philosophically or permanently true.

The reality that philosophy founded upon science is the one thing needful, the source and the vital principle of all morality and all peace to individuals and goodwill among men, had become the crown of my experience and the joy of my life. My comrade (Mr. Atkinson) and I were both pioneers of truth. We both care for our kind, and we could not see them suffering as we had suffered without imparting to them our consolation and our joy. Having found, as my friend said, a spring in the desert, should we see the multitude wandering in desolation and not show them our refreshment? *Then* (in younger days) I believed in a Protector, who ordered my work and would sustain me under it, and however I may now despise that sort of support, I had it then, and have none of that sort now. I have all that I want, and I would not exchange my present views, imperfect and doubtful as they are, I had better say I would not exchange my freedom from old superstition, if I were to

be burned at the stake next month, for all the peace and quiet of orthodoxy. Nor would I for my exemption give up the blessing of the power of appeal to thoughtful minds. When I experienced the still new joy of feeling myself to be a portion of the universe, resting on the security of its everlasting laws, certain that its Cause was wholly out of the sphere of human attributes, and that the special destiny of my race is infinitely nobler than the highest proposed under a scheme of 'divine moral government,' how could it matter to me that the adherents of a decaying mythology were still clinging to their Man-God? Under this close experience (of illness), I find death in prospect the simplest thing in the world—a thing not to be feared or regretted, or to get excited about it in any way. I attribute this very much to the nature of my views of death. Now the release is an inexpressible comfort. I see that the dying naturally and regularly, unless disturbed, desire and sink into death as into sleep. I feel no solicitude about a parting which will bring no pain. Under the eternal laws of the universe I came into being, and under them I have lived a life so full that its fulness is equivalent to length; thus there is much in my life that I am glad to have enjoyed, and much that generates a mood of contentment at its close. Besides that I never dream of wishing that anything were otherwise than as it is; and I am frankly satisfied to have done with life. I have had a noble share of it, and I desire no more. I neither wish to live longer here, nor to find life again elsewhere. It seems to me simply absurd to expect it."*

It is no part of the purpose of this article

* "Autobiography," pp. 333, 438.

to discuss the *truth* of the doctrine that there is no God, and that death terminates human consciousness. Nor yet do I question whether a high sense of loyalty to what is understood to be truth may not make it appear to any one holding such doctrines that he is under the obligation to publish them frankly to the world. Many a man who is an Atheist as regards God, holds (what many believers in Him lack) a noble faith in Truth *as* Truth, a firm conviction that nothing can be better than Truth, and that, as Carlyle said, "to nothing but error can any truth be dangerous." It is not, then, the holding of such views as those above quoted, nor yet their frank publication and defence, wherewith we are now concerned; but with the *tone of exultation* with which they are announced, the disregard and contempt which is manifested for the dearest hopes, the purest aspirations, of the great mass of mankind.

Magnanimity has two phases. We may be magnanimous on our own account,—brave, calm and self-reliant in the face of things which appal feebler souls. Of this sort of personal magnanimity, this remarkable woman

has given a very fine example. Here are the words she wrote twenty years after the foregoing pages, in her last letter to her friend:

"I cannot think of any future as at all probable except the annihilation from which some people recoil with so much horror. For my part, I have no objection to such an extinction. I well remember the passion wherewith W. E. Forster said to me, 'I had rather be damned than annihilated.' I have no wish for any further experience, nor have I any fear of it."*

These words have in them a calmness, simplicity and courage, which demand our honour, written as they were by an aged woman (as she herself describes them a few lines further) "under the clear knowledge of death being so near at hand." The old vulgar theory, so frequently harped upon in the last generation, that the right place to judge a man's religious views is his death-bed, and that while orthodox believers alone can die bravely, sceptics must needs expire in anguish and alarm, with "a certain fearful looking-for of judgment,"—has been thoroughly exploded

* Harriet Martineau's last letter to Mr. Atkinson, Ambleside, May 19, 1876, "Autobiography," Vol. III, p. 453.

by the now numberless instances of perfect courage exhibited by dying men and women, who had long before abandoned the hopes of a happy futurity which Revealed or Natural Religion have to offer. Harriet Martineau's serene self-resignation into eternal nothingness ought, if any further evidence were wanting, to suffice to set the matter finally at rest; and it may be cited very properly by disbelievers in Immortality as exhibiting what they deem to be the fitting and dignified tone of a philosophical mind drawing near to the horizon beneath which it will presently disappear for ever. No one can help respecting courage, under whatever form or circumstances it is manifested; and if a man think that he is on the verge of annihilation, it is truly dignified and praiseworthy to approach it with unflinching eye and unblenched cheek. This is *so far as the individual is concerned.* But is there not another and larger side of the question, which the very noblest man *ought* to feel as awful and heart-rending—nay, must feel to be so, in proportion to his nobleness and his power to extend his view beyond his own petty personality?

True magnanimity, it seems to me, must look far outside of a man's own lot, of his past share of life's feast and his readiness now to rise from it satisfied, and must take a wide survey of the lives (so far as they can be known or guessed) of all other men—of the poverty-stricken, the savage, the ignorant, the diseased, the enslaved, the sin-degraded—and attain the conclusion that for *these* also, as well as for himself, life on earth has been sufficient good, and none other need be asked or desired, before he can complacently speak of the *joy* of abandoning faith in God and Immortality. "I have had a noble share of life, and I desire no more," is an expression of personal sentiment which may or may not be right and fitting on the assumed hypothesis. But to join to such expression of individual contentment no word of regret for the closing in of all hope to the suffering millions of our race who have *not* had "noble" shares of life, and who do, with yearning hunger, desire more than has ever fallen to their lot,—this is, as it seems to me, the reverse of magnanimity. This is littleness and selfishness almost as bad as that of the bigots whom these Atheists

abhor, who rejoice to expect heaven for themselves, while leaving thousands of their brethren to perdition. It might be pardonable in one brought up to believe in hell, and who hurriedly leaped to the doctrine of annihilation from that intolerable yoke, and cried, "Let us all perish together, rather than that hideous doom overtake a single creature!" Such a choice would be generous and worthy. But when a woman, who probably never at any period of her life believed in the eternal perdition of a soul, proclaims herself enraptured at the joy of finding out that there is neither a God to protect the weak, nor, finally, any holiness or happiness beyond the grave,—then, I repeat, this is *not* magnanimity, but gigantic selfishness.

Let us think a little what it would signify to mankind to give up God and Heaven—that is, the *belief* in God and Heaven; for,—God be praised!—it rests with no philosophic school to put out the sun or prevent the morning from breaking, but only to *blind our eyes to them.*

Dr. James Martineau once made in a sermon the startling remark, that "if it could be known that God was dead, the news would

cause but little excitement in the streets of Berlin or Paris." The observation was doubtless true; for of *direct* thought of God, the streets of great cities are probably the emptiest of any places wherein mortals may be found. But there is an enormous share of human ideas and feelings not directly or consciously turned towards God, yet nevertheless coloured by the belief that such a Being exists. Perhaps it would be more proper to say, that in Christendom every idea and every feeling has imperceptibly been built up on the theory that there is a God. We see everything *with Him for a background.* Inanimate Nature and the lower animals—human history and society—poetry, literature, science and art,—every one of them has its religious aspect, which can only be excluded by a mental *tour de force.* Take inanimate Nature, for example—the region where it seems easiest to sever the links of habitual thought, and which the doctrine of Evolution (according to some of its teachers) has already withdrawn from the domain of a Creative Power. We all love this Nature, and our hearts are moved to their depths by sympathy with it when we gaze

round of a summer morning upon the woods and hills and waters, or later in the year upon the "happy autumn fields" of ripened corn, or on a winter's night up into the solemn host of stars. But is it merely the "glittering patnes of bright gold," or fields of yellow wheat, or the block of wood and rock which form the forest or the mountain, which awaken in us such mysterious emotion? Are we not dimly worshipping the Soul of Nature through earth and sky,—the Spirit wherewith our spirits are in ineffable harmony, and of which all the loveliness we behold is but the shadow?

Let some Agnostic disenchanter come to us at such an hour and tell us, that, though it takes a man of genius to depict worthily on canvas a corner of this wide field of loveliness, yet that the whole great original had no Painter, no Designer; that the mountains had no Architect, the well-balanced stars no supreme Geometer, but that it all came about as we behold it through the action of forces, unguided by any Mind, undirected by any Will; and what revulsion shall we not experience? Shall we not feel like a man enamoured of a beautiful woman, whom he

has believed to be good and wise and tender; but when he comes at last to look close into her face he finds her to be a soulless idiot, from whose stony and meaningless gaze he turns shuddering away?

Science, again, is but a mere heap of Facts, not a golden chain of Truths, if we refuse to link it to the throne of God.* In every department of human thought, in short, something —and that something the most beautiful in it —must be lost, some sacred spell must be broken, if we are to think of it as divested from the deeper sense which Religion has (all unconsciously to ourselves) given to it—the thread of Purpose running through; the understood promise of Justice; the sympathy of an unseen, all-beholding Spectator.

In the same way all human relationships will be stripped of the majestic mantle under

* I have heard of two very great living philosophers who thought they had pretty nearly got rid of Final Causes, but who, in talking together, found it hard to avoid assuming their existence. One of them, in fact, in detailing his own observations and discoveries concerning animals and plants, used so often terms implying that there was a *purpose* visible in natural arrangements, that his friend stopped him and said, "Mr. ——, you are getting strangely *teleological!*"

which they have been sheltered. The idea of the common Fatherhood of God, which Paganism in its best days had begun to teach, and which Christ's lessons have made the familiar thought of every European child, has put a meaning into the phrase of Human Brotherhood which it is much to be doubted if the warmest "Enthusiasts of Humanity" would, without such preliminary training, have been able to give to it. The idea (poorly as it has been hitherto recognized) that the most degraded of mankind, those from whom we naturally turn in disgust, have yet the same Creator and the same Judge as ourselves, has beyond question an indirect influence of no small force over all our sentiments concerning them. The same reflection has even at last begun to exercise a perceptible influence over our conduct to the brutes. Christians and Theists of every shade may be found impressed with the sense that religion demands the humane treatment of all sentient creatures; and this whether they take the view of Cardinal Manning, that "if I owe no moral duties to the lower animals, I owe all the moral duties that are conceivable to the

Creator of those animals—humanity, mercy and care for them;" or take the simple Theist standpoint, that, as we love Him, so we naturally look with sympathy and tenderness on everything He has made. Of course this motive of humanity to brutes disappears with the belief in God; and accordingly we find, with quite logical fitness, that while the opposition to brute torture is maintained by men of every varied shade of religion the majority of the chief viviseetors of Europe are professed Materialists. Vivisection is the logical outcome of Atheism as regards the brutes; and M. Paul Bert an Carl Vogt are only the most candid examples of men who have carried it out.

But it is in the region of the personal virtues —Purity, Truth, Temperance, Contentment— that the loss of the belief in God will be most disastrous. I am far from maintaining that, putting Religion wholly out of sight, there are not motives of a purely ethical kind left which *ought* to make men practise the highest inward virtue. But I think it needs only a slight knowledge of human nature to perceive that the shutting up of the window of the

soul, through which an awful and most holy Spectator has hitherto been believed to gaze into all its secrets, must leave a great deal in darkness which has been till now illumined with a sin-exposing light. It takes much for a man to say, like the author of *In Memoriam*,

"The *dead* shall look me through and through."

The idea of any eye perceiving all that is going on in the recesses of the mind,—the double motives, the unfaithfulnesses, the vanities, the memories of old shameful errors,—this is hard enough. But the belief that such introspection is always taking place, and by the Holiest of all beings, is undoubtedly a sort of purification such as no mere solitary process of self-examination can resemble. Even a warm human friendship in youth brings with it always a burst of self-knowledge. We see ourselves quite freshly in our friend's view of us. But a thousand times greater inevitably is the self-revelation which comes with the realized Presence of God in the soul; the flood of sunshine which discloses all the motes which fill the atmosphere of our thoughts. Now though it is only spiritually-minded men

who know this experience in its full intensity, yet every man who believes in God has gleams of it at intervals through life which are never afterwards quite forgotten. But more (and this is a point which concerns the whole Theistic moral argument most importantly), the supreme experience of spiritual men is *filtered down* through all grades of minds by books and intercourse. The lofty standard of purity which has been revealed to them is partially exhibited by their words and example, and forms a kind of high-water mark for lesser souls. It is an immense gain, even to very poor sinners, that there should be a few rich saints; and every man who has attained a lofty conception of holiness helps to make all the world around him conscious of its unholiness. He is a mirror in a dark place; the ray of light which has fallen on him dispels somewhat of the gloom around.

Thus if the belief in God be lost to humanity, we shall lose not only the direct, the incalculable effects on individual souls of the belief in a Divine Searcher of Hearts, but also the indirect and universal uplifting influence on society of the presence of men who have

experienced such effects, and formed their moral standard accordingly. Is it too much to augur that the result will be a depreciation of the common ideal standard, and a consequently still further depression of the practical level of personal virtue?

What is left, when Religion is gone, to give to the personal virtues of Purity (of *thought* as well as of act), of Truth, Temperance and Contentment, the high status they ought to hold? These virtues, in the history of the moral development of mankind, are always the last to be recognized. In the earlier age of morality, nobody asks for more than negative merits—*not* to murder or rob or deal treacherously. Then comes the great step, when the rabbinical precept, "Thou shalt *not* do to another what thou wouldest not he should do to thee," is exchanged for the positive Christian law, *Do* to another what thou wouldest he should do to thee. But only very slowly, above and beyond all social duties, the principle, "Be perfect, as thy Father in Heaven is perfect," has dawned on mankind as the aim of life; and how little it is yet the practical rule of conduct, there is

no need to tell. Let us but let slip our faith in the perfect Father in Heaven, and will it not sink again by degrees into oblivion? We shall hear a great deal, doubtless (for a time, at all events), of the duty of "labouring for the cause of humanity," and be encouraged by promises of "posthumous activity." But where are the motives for personal and secret virtue to come from—that inward virtue without which even warm social benevolence soon becomes tainted? It *must*, it would seem, fall more and more into the background. There is, theoretically, no more reason for placing it forward—there is no more any "End of Creation" in contemplation, to which the virtue of each soul, to be wrought out by its own struggles, must contribute its quotum. *The intrinsic moral character of each soul* will no longer be deemed the concern of any Being except the man himself, but only what *each is able to achieve in the way of contributing to the welfare of other people.* While the lesson of the higher ethics has been, "It is more important to *be* good than to *do* good," that of the new ethics must inevitably be, "It is very important what you *do* it is of the smallest

possible consequence what you *are*, except in so far as your neighbours may know it and be affected thereby."

In another way, also, I think Morality would be affected enormously, though still indirectly, by the downfall of Religion. Many of my readers will recall a very able article on Atheism in the *National Review* for January, 1856, by Mr. R. H. Hutton, in which it was maintained that "Atheism has no language by which it can express the infinite nature of moral distinctions. It is not, as has been falsely said, that Right and Wrong take their distinction from measures of duration, but that faith in infinite personal life, and in communion with, or separate from, infinite Good, is the only articulate utterance which our conscience can find for its sense of the absolutely boundless significance it sees in every moral choice." Take away this *expression* of the infinite nature of moral distinctions, and the *sense* of it will very rapidly dwindle away.

And, after all, can it be said in the same sense, under an Atheistic as under a Theistic creed, that moral distinctions *are* "infinitely" significant? Is there any "infinite" left for

us to talk about, when we have abolished God and Immortality? Some few thousands of years ago, on the Atheistic hypothesis, when man was just emerging from apehood, there was no Being anywhere who distinguished Right from Wrong;* and some few thousand years to come, when the final glacial period sets in, there will be nobody left to know anything about it. There is no Being now in the universe in whom Righteousness is impersonated, nor any world to come wherein the injustices of this will be rectified. From the eternal and immutable law of the universe, the ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῆ θεῶν νόμιμα, which Sophocles held it to be, the Moral Law has sunk to a mere "Rule of Thumb," whereby certain ephemeral creatures on our small planet find it most beneficial on the whole to regulate their behaviour. Is it in the nature of things to pay to such a Rule the sort of obedience and reverence we have paid to the Divine

* Or at least *our* Right from Wrong, for on Mr. Darwin's showing there may, it seems, be a different right and wrong for creatures differently constituted in other worlds, whose interests, being different, will cause different "sets" of their brains towards the lines of action useful to their tribes accordingly.

Law? And if, with the very highest sanctions which can be conceived, that Law has but too often failed to secure our obedience against the temptations of selfishness and passion, does anybody expect that, when it is divested of all those sanctions, it will prevail even so far as it has done hitherto?

These are some of the indirect ways in which mankind must lose Beauty and Truth and Goodness, as it loses faith in God and Immortality. But the direct losses inevitably to follow are, if possible, graver still.

The course of the moral life, after it has been commenced in earnest, probably passes through the same two great phases in almost every man who lives long enough. At first, Duty is a hard effort, and *all* effort. A strong hand seems to be laid on the man, urging him up a toilsome road. Every evil tendency of his nature has to be separately fought with and trampled down; every act of self-sacrifice for others to be performed with exertion of his will. The man labours heroically under his stern sense of duty, taking consolation in it *as* duty; but still looking rather to fulfil *his* obligation, than desirous that the end of each

task should be accomplished. If he die at this stage, it is in some sense a release. He has discharged his duty as a soldier, and is glad to lay down his arms. If he be a religious man, he hopes to hear it said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

But if a man live many years, striving in earnest, however failingly, to do his duty, there comes by degrees a change in his condition. Old temptations die down, and, if no new ones arise to give him trouble, the friction of the inner life diminishes so sensibly, that he is apt to be alarmed lest he be growing indifferent. As to his positive duties, those which he has been fulfilling merely because he felt it laid upon him to undertake them, by degrees acquire interest for him for their own sake. He is intensely anxious for the success of his labours, and no longer measures his efforts by what may be considered his moral obligations. He *wants* such and such aged or suffering persons to be relieved, such sinners to be reclaimed, such children trained to virtue, such truths published, such wrongs redressed, such useful laws, or reforms, or

discoveries introduced. There is no need now for him to spur himself by reflections that it is his duty to work for these ends; the difficulty with him now lies to moderate his work with a view to the preservation of health and strength. It would be cruelty to tell him his task has been honourably fulfilled, though the object of it has failed. He would cry, "Let me be accounted a faithless servant, but let the work be accomplished by another, and I shall be content." If he die *now*, he takes very little comfort from thinking he has discharged his duty. The work is not finished, and will miss his hand. He says, as Theodore Parker said to me on his death-bed, "I am not afraid to die, but I wish I might carry on my work. I have only half used the powers God gave me."

Now, in all this history of the moral life, it appears that no ostensible difference need exist between the sentiments of an Atheist and a Theist, *provided we can carry the Atheist safely to the second stage of progress.* Once there, it is evident that no change in his opinions about God or loss of hope of Heaven will practically affect his conduct. The habits of self-control

whereby he has ruled his passions will not be lost, the interest he has taken in unselfish objects will not dwindle. He will go on to the end, labouring for the good of his kind, and regret his own death mainly because it will stop those labours. But how are ordinary men, of no specially elevated moral fibre, to be carried up to that turning-point where Law is superseded by Love? I am far from thinking that men may not, and do not often, begin their self-reformation when they are (so far as their own consciousness goes) quite alienated from God or disbelieving His existence. I know, on the contrary, that it is no uncommon experience that this should be so. But, in the ordinary history of the soul, the resolute effort to obey conscience, after a very little time brings with it a sense, first dim, then shining more to the perfect day, that there *is* (as Mr. Matthew Arnold says) "a Power not ourselves which makes for Righteousness;" or, in plainer revelation, that God watches and helps the soul which strives to do right. Henceforth the mechanical moral effort is aided by the electric force of religion, burning away the dross of sin in the fire of a Divine Presence,

and making self-sacrifice sweet as an offering of love. But if this normal process whereby Morality leads up to Religion and becomes thereby aided through all future effort, is to be rigidly prohibited by reason—if we are to starve out the religious sentiment as a passion not to be indulged by a rational being—then, I ask, how many are the men and women who, after their first good resolutions, will persist in the course of arduous moral effort long enough to reach that stage when duty becomes comparatively easy? Where are the aids to come from to keep them from self-indulgence? We have seen that the Moral Law itself is to be represented to them as merely an hereditary set of the brain; that they are not to dream there is any Holy Eye looking at them, any strong Hand ready to aid their feeble steps, any Infinite Love drawing them to itself, any Life beyond the grave where the imperfect virtue of earth shall grow and blossom in eternal beauty. All these ideas are to be resolutely dismissed. The habit of Prayer (irreparable, immeasurable loss!) is to be discarded. Nothing is to be left save only the one motive of the Enthusiasm of Humanity,

which is to replace God and Conscience and Heaven. Let me speak out concerning this much-boasted modern sentiment.

I have heard a good man, one of the best men I know, preaching on this subject, and saying, "Do you ask why should you love your neighbour? *Because you cannot help it!*" Now, as I listened to that genuine philanthropist's utterance, my heart smote me, and I said to myself, "But I *could* help it, and only too easily! It comes to him spontaneously, I have no doubt, to love his neighbours; but I have been trying to do it for many years, and have very imperfectly succeeded. Instead of *beginning* with love, and going on to duty towards them as the result of love, I have had to begin with duty, and, only with many a self-reproach for hardness of spirit, learned at last to feel love—for some of them!"

I do not think my experience is exceptional. I think the people who can and do love spontaneously that terribly large section of our race who are commonplace, narrow-minded and small of heart, are the exceptions, and that if we are to have no benevolence except from born philanthropists like the good man I have

named, we shall see very little in future of the Enthusiasm of Humanity.

No! It takes, for most of us, all the help to loving our brother which comes from believing that we have a common Father and a common Home—all the help which comes to the heart in answer to the prayer that God would melt its stoniness, and make it blossom into tenderness and sympathy—to enable us to attain the Love which is, not the *spring* of Social Duty, but its *climax;* the "fulfilling of the law."

I honestly think that the process of making Atheists, *trained as such*, into philanthropists, will be but rarely achieved. And I venture to propound the question to those who point to admirable living examples of Atheistic or Comtist philanthropy—How many of these have passed through the earlier stage of morality *as believers in God*, and with all the aid which prayer and faith and hope could give them? That they *remain* actively benevolent, having advanced so far, is (as I have shown above) readily to be anticipated. But will their children stand where they stand now? We are yet obeying the great impetus of Religion, and running along the rails laid

down by our forefathers. Shall we continue in the same course when that impetus has stopped, and we have left the rails altogether? I fear me not.

In brief, I think the outlook of Atheism as a *Moral Educator*, as black as need be. Viewed with the utmost candour, and admitting all the excellence of many of its disciples, I think Atheism must deduct from Morality the priceless training to Reverence afforded by religion; the illuminating consciousness of an unseen Searcher of hearts; the invigorating confidence in an Almighty Helper; the vivifying influence of Divine Love; and finally, the immeasurable, inestimable benefits derivable from that practice of Prayer which is God's own education of the soul.

But whatever may be its results as a system of moral training, Atheism in its ultimate aspect must be, to every religious man and woman who is driven to adopt it in later life, the setting of the Sun which has warmed and brightened existence. We may *live* in the twilight, but that which gave to prosperity its joy, to grief its comfort, to duty its delight, to love its sweetness, to solitude its charm, to all

life its meaning and purpose, and to death its perfect consolation and support, is lost for ever. There are no words to tell what that loss must be—worst of all to those who are least conscious of it, and who have therefore lost with their faith in God those spiritual faculties in the exercise of which man has his higher being, and of which the pains are better worth than all the pleasures of earth.

Atheism involves a far *worse* loss to humanity than the exclusion of the belief in a Life after Death; but we can form no fair estimate of the deduction which our complacent Agnostics are prepared to make from the sum of human virtue and happiness, if we do not thoroughly realize what it is they are talking of when they tell us so cheerfully to abandon the hope of Immortality, as well as the belief in God, and that they are quite satisfied to do both.

As far as each individual is personally concerned, such Hope is of course a very variable sentiment. There are those who say (as Miss Martineau mentions Mr. W. E. Forster saying to her), "I would rather be damned than annihilated." And there are others who say,

as she does herself, "I have had a very noble share of life, and I do not ask any more." With the latter feeling *per se*, no one has a right to quarrel. To many, no doubt, especially persons of feeble bodily health or overstrained conscientiousness, the notion of final repose is more grateful than that of an immortality of activity. They feel in our day, as it would seem almost everybody did in more trying times, that it was the "rest which remaineth for the people of God," beyond the storms of the world,—the "everlasting beds of rest" on which the weary may lie,—rather than our more modern notion of a Heaven of Progress, to which they aspire. There are Buddhists of the West as of the East, to whom, by some natural or acquired habit of mind, existence itself seems a burden, and they extend the *tedium vitæ* which they feel here, by anticipation to any future state to which they could be transferred. With such persons as these, as I have just said, we have no claim to contend, even though we may think, with Tennyson, that, if they knew themselves better, they would recognize that even in uttermost lassitude,

"'Tis *life* of which our veins are scant;
O Life, not Death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, *that* we want."

The dreams of men as to what they desire beyond the grave are infinitely varied, from Nirvana to Valhalla, and nothing is to be said, so far as he himself is concerned, respecting a man who wishes it to be written on his tombstone that he

"From Nature's temperate feast rose satisfied,
Thanked Heaven that he had lived and that he died,"

except this; that his choice of eternal sleep betrays the fact *that there is no one in this world or the next whom he loves well enough to wish to be awakened to meet him again.* Of course a man may have abundance of kindly and dutiful sentiments for his relatives and friends, and yet (thinking they will do well enough without him) be satisfied to quit them for ever. But I cannot believe that any one who has ever lost the object of the higher and more absorbing human affection, or who leaves behind him in dying one united to him by such transcendent love, can fail passionately to desire immortality. He may *resign* himself through philosophy or religion

(if his religion take the strange and rare form of belief in God and disbelief in a life to come), to see his beloved one no more. But not to *desire* to meet, at any cost of unwelcome ages of life, the being we profess to love supremely, seems to be a contradiction in terms. Were there to loom before us worlds to climb, and centuries of labour, we would surely thankfully go through them all to reach the hour when we shall say,

> "Soul of my soul! I shall meet thee again!
> And with God be the rest."

But because a loveless man may, without blame, be content to let death drop a final curtain on his consciousness, it is quite another matter for him to be equally placidly resigned to the extinction of the hopes of others, who have had no such feast of life as he, or who yearn for the renewal of affection hereafter. As I have elsewhere attempted to show, in a little parable, such resignation *on behalf of other people* is very much like that of Dives,*

* The following letter appeared in the *Spectator*:—

"SIR,—Indulging in the pernicious habit of reading in bed, I last night perused with profound interest

who, having fared sumptuously, should be serenely contented to let Lazarus starve.

Nor is it only the *comfort* of expecting to see our beloved ones again which we shall lose with the hope of a future life. I am persuaded that a great deal of the higher part of love itself will fade out of human

Mr. Greg's letter in your current number, your own remarks thereupon, and also Mr. Greg's generous defence of his old friend, Harriet Martineau, in the *Nineteenth Century*. As my eyes closed on the last paragraph of this article, I seemed to behold a vision, which I shall take leave to describe to you.

"Dives had just eaten a particularly plentiful dinner, and was standing at the door of a pretty cottage in Ambleside. Lazarus, looking up at him, said, pitifully, 'I perish with hunger.' Thereupon Dives observed, with great serenity, 'Lazarus, I have had an excellent dinner. There is not a crumb left. But I am quite content, and you ought to be the same.'

"Poor Lazarus, however, instead of seeming satisfied, wailed yet more sadly, 'But I hunger, Dives! I hunger for the bread of life! I hunger for human love, of which I had only begun to taste, when it was snatched away. I hunger for justice, of which such scant measure has been dealt me, and to millions like me. I hunger for truth, I hunger for beauty, I hunger for righteousness; I hunger for a love holy, divine, and perfect, which alone can satisfy my soul. I hunger, Dives! I hunger, and you tell me there is not a crumb

existenee altogether if that hope be generally abandoned. Every one knows how friendship and marriage are hallowed by the thought of their perpetuity even in this world,

left of the rich feast of existence, and bid me be content. It is a cruel mockery.'

"Then Dives answered yet more placidly, 'I never dream of wishing anything were otherwise than it is. I am frankly satisfied to have done with life. I have had a noble share of it, and I desire no more; I utterly disbelieve in a future life.'

"At that moment my respected friend Mr. Greg passed by, and heard what Dives was saying; on which, to my great surprise, he made the following observation:—'This is, unquestionably, the harder—*may it not also be the higher?*—form of pious resignation. The last achievement of the ripened mind.'

"As for Lazarus, on catching Mr. Greg's remark, he turned himself painfully on the ground, and groaned:—'I never heard before of anybody being '*piously resigned*' to the woes and wants *of other people.* La Rochefoucauld was right, I suppose, to say, 'Nous avons tous assez de force pour supporter les maux d'autrui;' but for my part, I should not precisely call Dives's satisfaction in his 'noble share' of the feast, while I am doomed to perish starving, by quite so fine a name as 'pious resignation.' Pray, Mr. Greg, with your large humanity, take *my* case into consideration, before you credit Dives with anything better than stupendous egotism.'

"Startled by the vehemence of poor Lazarus, I awoke.—I am, Sir, &c."

and how a union is debased if it be, consciously to those who make it, temporary and transitory. Hitherto we have loved one another *as Immortal Beings;* as creatures whose affections belonged to the exalted order of eternal things. When that ennobling and sanctifying element evaporates, when Love, like everything else, is reduced to a question of days and months and years, will it not undergo somewhat of the degradation which now belongs to the brief contracts of passion? Even those who might still be able to feel all the holiness of love would, when they learned it was destined to end in the agony of eternal separation, check themselves from indulging a sentiment leading up inevitably to such a termination, just as a man would turn from a path ending in a precipice.

Thus, I believe, the Affections must irretrievably suffer from the loss of the hope of immortality. So must in a measure the Intellect and the Imagination, driven from the wider expanse back on that poor fleshly life which is to be the end-all of man, and which must be destined to assume an importance it has never possessed since our race

emerged from its brute and barbarian origin. Nor would our Moral life fail to suffer also very grievously, though in another way from that which has been alleged. I think we can scarcely now estimate the *minifying* consequences of closing all outlook beyond this world, and shutting up morality within the narrow sphere of mortal life. As I have said in my "Hopes of the Human Race;" it is not possible we should continue to attach to Virtue and Vice the same profound significance, when we believe their scope to reach no further than our brief span, and Justice to be a dream of our puny race never to be realized throughout the eternal ages. In theory, Right and Wrong must come to be regarded as of comparatively trivial importance; and, practically, the virtue destined shortly to be extinguished for ever must seem to the tempted soul scarcely deserving of an effort. Life, after we have passed its meridian, must become in our eyes more and more like an autumn garden, wherein it would be vain to plant seeds of good which can never bloom before the frosts of death, and useless to eradicate weeds which must be killed ere long without

our labour. Needless to add, that of that dismal spot it may soon be said:

> "Between the time of the wind and the snow
> All loathsome things began to grow;"

and when the winter comes at last, none will regret the white shroud it throws over corruption and decay.

But it is when we come to think of Humanity *as a whole* that the prospect of final extinction appears so unutterably deplorable, so lame and impotent a conclusion for all the struggles, the martyrdoms and the prayers of a hundred generations who have gone to the grave in hope and faith—*and perished there.* We Englishmen and women have been wont to think proudly of the vast geographical extension of our country's dominion, the grandeur of the Empire on which the sun never sets; and the remark has often been made that there is not a petty corporation or board in the kingdom whose proceedings are not, in a degree, dignified by the sense of England's greatness. The politicians who have expressed a readiness to give up our Colonies have been taunted, and justly, with lack of the nobler patriotism which regards

not only financial and administrative details, but the larger interests and glory of what we have delighted to call our Imperial Race. But what would be the loss to the *prestige* of England of the severance of Australia and Canada and India, compared to the loss to mankind of that glorious empery of Immortality in which it has prided itself since the beginning of history? Everything we have achieved and thought—our literature, art, laws, kingdoms, churches—have all been wrought and built up in this faith, which has given value to the soul of the humblest child, and added grandeur to the most splendid deeds of the hero and the martyr. With that Hope disappears not only the consolation of all bereaved hearts, but the very crown upon the head of humanity.

It is no argument for the truth of any opinion, that the disclosure of its falsehood may have disastrous consequences. Nothing that has been advanced in this paper proves, or has been offered as proof, that there is a God, or a Life to come. The foundations for those beliefs belong to a different order of

considerations. But I think thus much may be presumed to have resulted from our inquiry —namely, that their value to the virtue and the happiness of mankind is so incalculably vast, that the work of demolishing them ought to be carried on by men professing to love their kind, in a very different spirit from that which is generally exhibited by Agnostics. Even if their position be true, and if they be morally bound to make known to the world that such is the case, and to put an end to the baseless dream which has deluded our race for so many thousand years,—even granting this, I think it remains clear that their task is one to be undertaken only under the sternest sense of duty, and with immeasurable mournfulness and regret. I think that, instead of rejoicing over the discovery of "a Spring in the Desert," it behoves them to weep tears, bitter as ever fell from human eyes, over the grave wherein they bury the Divine Love and the Immortal Hope of our miserable race.

HYGEIOLATRY.

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THE advance of physical science and the simultaneous retreat of religious faith, threaten, among their numerous consequences, to introduce a new principle into Morals. We may call it Doctor's Doctrine; not because it is by any means the exclusive property of the medical profession, or that all doctors can be supposed to hold it, but because it is more rife amongst them and tells more directly on their work, than in the case of other men. It is indeed excusable for a physician to attribute to bodily Health, wherewith this new principle is concerned, more importance than a poet, a preacher, or a soldier, is likely to concede to it; and to this natural tendency is added, pretty frequently perhaps, a tolerably defined materialism, which not merely connects but

identifies genius, happiness and virtue with physical soundness, and stupidity, misery and crime with diseased organization. With such views, and deprived of that vista of an eternal future which alone gives to human things their true perspective, it is not wonderful that many should come to regard bodily Health as the *summum bonum*, and thence to deduce the principle to which I desire to call attention as an innovation in ethics. Reduced as nearly as possible to a formula that principle is as follows :

That any practice which, in the opinion of experts, conduces to bodily Health or tends to the cure of disease, becomes, ipso facto, *morally lawful and right.*

I do not mean to imply that this principle has yet been clearly stated by any of its adherents, or that they are even generally conscious that they have adopted it. Possibly many who have practically embodied it in their conduct for years may repudiate it on seeing it defined in words. Nevertheless it may be traced as the substructure of innumerable arguments on all manner of subjects of public and private interest—arguments which, if the

principle were knocked from under them, would instantly be seen to fall baseless to the ground. It is, in short, the implied major term of a thousand syllogisms which we hear in every debate and read in every magazine and newspaper.

Now to measure the extent of the change which the adoption of this Doctor's Doctrine must introduce into ethics, it is only necessary to cast a glance backward at the older view of the relation of duty to Health which has hitherto prevailed in the world, and been taught pretty equally by moralists of every school with the exception of ascetics on one side, and pure hedonists on the other. That older lesson which we may for convenience call Divine's Doctrine, since it is the general teaching of every Protestant theologian and moralist, may be summed up in the canon—

Bodily Health may not be lawfully sacrificed to our desire of pleasure or fear of pain. It may and ought to be sacrificed to the health of our souls, to the service of our fellow men, or to fidelity to God.

In other words it has been taught that the man who injures his health by debauchery is

guilty of a serious moral offence, and he who commits suicide is guilty of a crime; but that, on the other hand, the man who sacrifices his health in the performance of his duty as physician, clergyman or soldier, or in endeavouring to save a fellow creature from flood or fire, or who gives up life itself rather than forswear himself, or renounce his religious faith, or commit a base or unclean action, is not only exonerated from any guilt, but is, in the highest degree, virtuous.

On these lines Christian civilization may be said to have been built up. The natural selfishness of human nature has been counteracted by the sense of duty, and if now and then needless and exaggerated self-sacrifices without adequate reason have been made, and there was room for brave Charles Kingsley to preach the claims of the natural laws of life, a thousand times more often has the sense of duty enabled men and women to perform alike the painful daily tasks whereby our homes are made beautiful and sacred, and the occasional acts of heroism wherewith human existence on earth is crowned and glorified.

It needs no words to prove to any one who

reflects, that two-thirds of what we have been wont to reverence as homely Virtue and all the martyrdoms of history, consist precisely in the voluntary sacrifice of health, or of health and life together. To withhold from such sacrifices the meed of moral admiration would be to reverse the judgment of all the ages,—to prefer Sardanapalus and Heliogabalus to Curtius and Regulus, and to treat as a deluded fanatic the apostle who converted the Gentile world but spent his years in perils by sea and land amid prisons and scourgings. From the crucifixion of Christ to the silent self-immolation of the poor consumptive girl who works half blinded through the winter's night to support her aged mother,—the holiest and the sweetest things this earth has witnessed have been the actions of those who counted not their lives dear to them, so long as they could obey the law of truth, of righteousness and of love.

But how is this recognition of the duty and glory of the sacrifice of health and life at the call of every higher law, to be reconciled with the "Doctor's Doctrine" that the interests of health are so supreme that they themselves constitute the highest law and render any

practice conducive to them *ipso facto* lawful? Either we must admit, according to the Divine's Doctrine, that moral interests transcend bodily interests, or we must hold, according to Doctor's Doctrine, that bodily interests transcend moral interests. There is no third alternative. One principle or the other must prevail, and sooner or later leaven society with its ennobling, or else its debasing influence. There are signs apparent that the Doctor's Doctrine is already bearing its proper fruit, and that soothed by a becalmed conscience, absolved by the authority of the Priesthood of Science, men and women are beginning to be systematically selfish and self-indulgent where their health is concerned, or where there may appear a chance of curing their maladies, in modes not hitherto witnessed. I can only indicate a few of the ways in which this deliberate self-preservation is exhibited.

Notably it seems that the old Courage of Englishmen is dwindling away. Almost every month cases come to light wherein men—even soldiers fail to stand by their comrades in danger; or wherein a crowd of fifty people witness a child drowning in a shallow pond without an

effort to save it; or men who witness a cruel murder rush from the spot leaving the yet breathing victim dying unaided on the ground. There is even, among young men, a cynical avowal of prudent concern for their own lives and limbs which constantly strikes the old, who remember the joyous youthful fearlessness of their fathers, as something altogether new and far indeed from pleasant to contemplate.

Nor are personal acts of selfishness and cowardice on a small scale the only logical consequences of the new principle which are already visible. Cruelty of the most heinous and systematic kind is another result. The unanimous resolution passed by the great Medical Congress in the year of grace 1881, has proclaimed that vivisection leads to discoveries conducive to the cure of disease, and *therefore* should be sanctioned and left unrestricted by law. That is to say, that all the fiendish imaginations of men like Mantegazza and Schiff, and Goltz and Bernard, and Paul Bert, should be freely permitted in England for the sake of a chance of useful hints for therapeutic science. Thus the whole medical profession in England

stands committed to the demand that the vice of cruelty in young men and old should be deliberately unchained, expressly for the sake of anticipated benefits to bodily health.

So far indeed has Doctor's Doctrine made its way, that whenever any Bill concerning sanitary measures or public hygiene is before Parliament, there is exhibited by the speakers in the House, and by the journalists who discuss the matter, a readiness to trample on personal rights to an extent which would excite indignation were any religious or commercial interest in question. Men may spread the most deadly *moral* diseases, and teach doctrines which make virtue a mockery and life a hopeless desolation ; and scarcely an effort is made to stop them. But let them threaten to spread bodily disease, and (unless they be medical men and thus authorized transmitters of infection) the most stringent measures are adopted; and, beside a Compulsory Vaccination Act and the ever-infamous Contagious Diseases Acts, even while these sheets are passing through the press, no less than three Bills are before Parliament to make compulsory the notification of infectious

disease and segregation of infected persons. I am not now discussing the merits of these Acts and Bills, I am only observing that the spirit wherewith they are carried forward is quite an innovation in English legislation. Health of body has been accorded the importance which the—real or supposed—interests of the soul alone commanded two centuries ago; and the tyranny of the priesthood of Hygeia threatens to be as high-handed as ever was that of the Churches of Rome or of Geneva.

Lastly there is, outside of legislation, and hidden from the knowledge of the majority of the laity, one remaining application of the new principle of morals which more than all exhibits its evil, its disastrous tendency. For obvious reasons I cannot write plainly of this moral poisoning which I believe to be going on to a frightful extent, both in this country and abroad. I can only quote some observations made on it by an experienced minister of religion, published in the *Modern Review* for April, 1880:—

"Any one who will make a few casual inquiries will be amazed to discover the frequency with which medical

men of high repute—men who are admitted to the friendship of good and unsuspecting women — offer counsel to young men and even to boys which strikes at the root of all morality, and, indeed, can proceed from nothing else than scepticism concerning the very possibility of morality itself. We speak what we know not of one, but of many, and what no medical man will deny, though many a medical man will revolt from the action of his fellow-practitioners as vehemently as we ourselves. What we ask of these purer spirits in the healing fraternity is that they will speak out on this and other matters of professional practice, and condemn their less honourable colleagues with no faltering tongue."

The Bishop of Bedford taking the chair at the meeting, May 3rd of the present year (1882), of the Social Purity Alliance, alluded to this heavy charge against the medical profession in the following terms: "I know what doctors say, and I here publicly protest against the terrible thing that is often said by doctors to young men,—that sin is good for their health. I say God forgive those who have said it."

But it will be replied, "All these evils have existed for ages. There have always been found selfish, cruel, cowardly and profligate men, ready to transgress when their inclinations goaded them ; willing to rank their own health, life and enjoyment far before the law

of God or the interest of their fellows. What signifies, then, a new formula of selfishness?"

It signifies, I venture to say, a great deal. Hitherto men did evil; but they (or their neighbours for them), had at least the grace to recognize that it was evil. The selfish man was charged with selfishness. The cruel man did not assume the airs of a benefactor of mankind. The coward was kicked as a poltroon, not rewarded with sympathetic smiles for his candour. The man who sought the dens of vice did not go thither with his conscience pacified by his physician's orders in his pocket. To teach men that "a practice conducive to health is *ipso facto* morally right," is, then, at one and the same moment to damp every aspiration after the nobler kinds of virtue, and to supply a justification for every meaner kind of vice.

Neither selfishness, nor cowardice, nor cruelty, nor unchastity, can be justifiable by the plea that they may conduce to the bodily health of one man, or of a thousand men; and he who will save his life by such means will assuredly lose all that makes, "life worth living"; all for which Life was given.

PESSIMISM, AND ONE OF ITS PROFESSORS.

PESSIMISM, AND ONE OF ITS PROFESSORS.

The Rise and Progress of Buddhism in Europe may possibly form the subject of a long chapter in the hands of a Mosheim of the twentieth century. Hitherto, among all Western nations, not less than among the Jews, there has been a tolerably unanimous consensus that Life, on the whole, is good, and that it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun. Happiness, like health, has been assumed to be the normal condition of sentient beings; and misery, like disease, to be exceptional and abnormal. The dead have been pitied, inasmuch as they had passed away from so pleasant a world; more especially so by those classic peoples who believed that the departed dwelt in an insubstantial

realm of shadows. No energetic Northern race, however, contented itself with a twilight Hades, but built up in imagination a Valhalla of feast and war for the worshipper of Odin, and, for the disciple of the Druid, a glorious ascension from the darkness of "Abred" to the light and felicity of "Gwynfyd." Christianity, in its perverted forms, Catholic-ascetic and Calvinist, took away, indeed, much of the joyfulness of the old heathen world, and made divines speak of our earthly abode as a "City of Wrath" or "Vale of Tears." But they were all the more urgent that men should fight the good fight, of which the crown should be "*Life* everlasting" in the New Jerusalem; and, for the majority of their flocks, even this sinful planet remained, it would appear at all times, a sufficiently desirable habitation to make departure from it unwelcome.

Brought up in these common views, probably not one of us, modern Europeans, has perused, for the first time, a philosophical statement of the pessimist principles which underlie the vast religions of the further East, without a shock of astonishment. Individually, we may have found our particular

share of existenee painful rather than pleasurable. Disease, poverty, disappointment, bereavement, may have embittered our years. But that any order of men, outside of lunatic asylums, should lay down as a postulate, whereon to build religion and morality, that Life is *per se* an evil, and that "whatever we have been, 'tis something better not to be," and proeeed benevolently to point out how we may, by mueh diligenee, shake off, not only this mortal eoil, but the entire burden of being, and arrive at the eonsummation of Nonenity—this is an idea revolutionizing the order of our conceptions, and as nearly ineredible as any assertion dealing with the vagaries of the human mind may be. Even yet, perhaps, some doubts may legitimately linger as to whether the Buddhist ereed, elsewhere than in Nepaul (where it eertainly does *not* teaeh annihilation), really intends by "Nirvana" to set forth the Emptiness, rather than the Plenitude, of being. But that both Brahmin and Buddhist teaehers have systematieally dealt with Life as an Evil rather than as a Good, there is, I apprehend, no question among eompetent inquirers. Here, then, are

two, absolutely contrasted, fundamental conceptions of the totality of human existence—the Western, that Life is a blessing; the Eastern, that it is a curse. The European cries:

> "'Tis Life, not Death, for which we pant—
> More Life, and fuller, that we want."

He "shudders at destruction," and better endures to face even the tremendous threat of an eternal Hell than to relax the tenacity of his belief in an immortal consciousness. The Indian, on the contrary, devoutly hopes that a life (or several lives) of self-abnegation, may bring him to the bourne whence the traveller leaps into the gulf of Nothingness. Marvellous to add, as climax, there seems more likelihood that a certain number of highly-educated Germans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen may learn to sigh for Nirvana, than that our missionaries will induce an equal number of intelligent Singalese, Chinese, or natives of Siam to exchange their dreary anticipations for the hope of Heaven.

Not to exaggerate the importance of the "School" (if such it can be accounted) of European Buddhists, we may, I think, pro-

perly afford to its existence the attention due to a remarkable "fault" in the strata of recent thought; and still more fitly ponder on the significant tokens scattered through current literature, of Pessimist tendencies quite other than the Western world has hitherto exhibited. Our modern owls may be heard responding to each other in their turrets of the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly Review* sometimes solemnly and seriously, as when Mr. Morley wrote of "that droning, piteous chronicle of wrong, and cruelty, and despair which everlastingly saddens the compassionating ear like the moaning of a midnight sea"—sometimes with odious pretension and self-conceit when smaller men and foolish women hoot and croak. In the brightest intellectual circles many of us have learned to listen with well-bred calmness to assertions from smiling gentlemen and beautifully dressed ladies touching the general wrongness of all things, and the particular wretchedness of human nature, which—did we believe them — would cause us to rush from the dinner-table and hang ourselves on the nearest lamp-post. In Germany matters

have proceeded further; and Schopenhauer has been for some time as much the fashionable Philosopher, as Wagner is the Musician, of the age.

Of course there are various degrees and kinds of Pessimism everywhere to be noted. There is the Philanthropic Pessimist who thinks his fellow-creatures are merely wretched; and the Misanthropic Pessimist, who thinks them both wretched and despicable. There is the Theistic Pessimist, who still believes in God, but considers Him either to be a "baffled Ormusd," or else to look down from such heights on human affairs as to regard them no more than we do the politics and catastrophes of an ant-hill. And, finally, there is the Atheistic Pessimist, who has abandoned the notion of an Intelligence at the helm of the Universe, and believes only in a blind Force, irresponsible for all the misery and crime of which He—or rather It—is the cause. For all these varied kinds of Pessimism there seem to be two quite distinct sources; a good and noble, and a bad and base one. Each of these sources lead to results having an outward apparent similarity,

and accordingly create an illusory resemblance between the feelings and expressions of persons whose characters and actions are wide as the poles asunder. Let me endeavour to discriminate them.

It is, at the first glance, not a little remarkable that the development of Pessimism to which I have referred should have taken place in an age of almost unparalleled public prosperity. Probably the sufferings caused by disease, by want, and by injustice are now at their *minimum* in the settled countries of Europe. And yet it is in our time that men are now beginning formally to pronounce the evil of the world to exceed the good, and to treat what their fathers deemed the "Beneficent Order of Providence," as too harsh and unjust a system to be attributed to a benevolent Deity, or, indeed, to any intelligent Being at all. It was not in the days of old oppression and tyranny, of the great famines or the "Black Death," that there was any such revolt. When earth was much more like hell than it is at present, few men entertained any doubt that there was a God in heaven. Now that its worst wrongs are in course of

alleviation or remedy, and that there opens before our eyes a vista of almost illimitable progress for our race in happiness and virtue, the whole stupendous scheme is not unfrequently pronounced to be nothing better than a huge blunder.

The anomaly is certainly striking, and it may be carried further by noting *who* are those persons who find the world so bad a place. As it is a prosperous age which has developed Pessimism, so it is almost always prosperous people who are Pessimists. It is the rarest thing possible to hear any expression of such ideas from the lips of the suffering or the dying, or even from those who see their beloved ones suffer and die. A hundred visits to sordid lodgings or miserable hovels, to workhouses, jails, hospitals, asylums for the blind or the incurably diseased, will scarcely afford us the chance of catching a phrase indicating that the inmate of the dreary abode thinks the world awry, and Providence to blame for it. We must pass to pleasanter scenes, to the haunts of the well-paid lecture-frequenting artisan; or the houses of the most cultivated and wealthy of

the middle and upper classes—palaces which calamity has never visited, and where luxurious food, clothing, furniture, books, flowers, pictures, music, are accepted as matters of course; and *there* we may, not improbably, be told that "none but bigots who voluntarily close their eyes to the terrible realities of life can dream of calling the world a happy place, or speak of its design as beneficent." Sometimes there occurs in the experience of a single day a contrast, almost ludicrous, between the patience and gratitude manifested by some poor suffering creature—perhaps dying of cancer on a pauper's pallet—and the expressions of revolt and despair used by a cultivated gentleman who is possessed of nearly every source of human enjoyment.

All this is not so unmeaning and perverse as it at first appears. There is a reason why our generation—the happiest, and, we will hope, perhaps, on the whole, the best, the world has yet seen—should scan the dread problem of Evil with other eyes than its predecessors; and there are reasons, far from ignoble, why happy men and women should find it harder to justify the ways of God to

the miserable, than those miserable ones themselves to do so on their own account. In the first place, our generation shrinks from the sight of physical anguish in a way obviously unknown to our progenitors, who could ride gaily on their daily errands under gallows-trees loaded each with its sickening weight, or city gates decorated by decapitated heads; and who could feast and sleep in the chambers of feudal castles while under their floors miserable prisoners were pining in dungeons, or perhaps expiring amid the unutterable horrors of the *oubliette*. They could stand by as unmoved spectators, or throw fresh faggots on the piles where heretics and witches were burning, and shout applause when half-hanged traitors were cut down from the rope to be drawn and quartered. Oppressions and injustices done by the strong against the weak were matters of every-day experience in every town, almost in every parish and household. If such things seem to us calculated to provoke vehement indignation and rebellion against every Power above or below which sanctioned or permitted them, it must be asked, *who* was there in those days likely to feel any similar indig-

nation? The laws were not more cruel than the men who made them, nor the legislators than the mass of the nation. This being the case, how should those who thought it right and just that their fellows should endure such tortures find anything mysterious in the severest decrees of Providence? The order of Nature,—harsh to the eyes of a John Stuart Mill or a Shelley,—must have been mild enough to those of the *habitués* of Autos da Fé, or even, let us say, to the nobles of France under that *ancien régime* of which M. Taine has given us the picture.

Another difference between our age and all preceding ones which specially touches this matter is, that in former times men thought so little of the lower animals, that their lot scarcely entered as an item into calculation in the purview of the world. It was always the enigmas presented by *human* inequalities, sufferings, and wrongs which disturbed the doubter of old. His questions were, "Why do the wicked flourish like a green bay-tree? Why do the righteous perish, and none regardeth it? Why do the good and useful die

in the flower of their years, and the evil live long in the land? Why, in short, is not that great *Justice of Heaven* (in which man everywhere intuitively believes, though his intuition has assuredly never been evolved by experience), why is this not manifested in all the concerns of human beings?" The Book of Job posed the solemn question of this earlier doubt; and the Book of Revelation, by opening up to the gaze of men a Heaven where the poor and the persecuted will be for ever blessed and triumphant, afforded it a reply which, if far from complete, has yet practically sufficed to stay the faith of Christendom. By the fresh stress which Christianity laid on the doctrine of Immortality, and the different relative importance which it assigned to the earthly and to the heavenly Life, it fulfilled, in a profounder sense, the boast of the English statesman. It "called up a New World to redress the balance of the Old." The orthodox Catholic doctrine, that sin and suffering are necessarily permitted by the Creator to allow scope for moral freedom, may be made in a loose and general way to cover the larger

difficulties presented by the condition of all *moral* beings, for whose woes, if in any case, unmerited, compensation is provided hereafter. So long, then, as the destiny of our own human race alone occupied any appreciable place in philosophy (and this was down to the earlier part of this century) there was not much room for Pessimism to find root among Western races. As to the brutes, few thought of their sufferings at all, and those who did so dismissed them with the doctrine that they shared the consequences of the Fall, which caused "the whole creation" to groan and "travail together in pain."

> "These emmets, how little they are in our eyes!
> We tread them to dust, and a troop of them dies,
> Without our regard or concern;"

as Dr. Watts cheerfully observed of the poor little insects, even when he was calling us to remark their wondrous forethought and industry. And larger animals more nearly akin to us were little more "regarded" than the ants, till the widening circles of our sympathies at last began to embrace the higher races of the brute creation, and their sufferings then, as a necessary consequence,

immediately took a prominent place among the difficulties of theology. Geology first gave a shock to the received explanation of their destiny by proving that animals died painful deaths æons before "man's first disobedience" could have taken place, or Man himself had existence on this planet; and since those, now distant, days of Dean Buckland's controversies, the questions so opened out have pressed continually more upon the thought of humane and religious men. The faith for which such men yearn in our day is to be assured—

> "That not a moth with vain desire
> Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
> Or but subserves another's gain."

Not one of their grandsires, probably, ever entertained any similar idea, but rather indulged a sublime contempt of the "poor Indian," whose "untutored mind" permitted him to hope that his dog might share his paradise.

These causes, then, I think—namely, the growth of a finer sense of pity for human woes, and the inclusion of the lower animals

in the scope of our sympathies—suffice to explain in great measure the reasons why some of the best of men in our generation feel the evil and misery of the world, and display a leaning towards Pessimism unexampled in harder times.

Nearly all religious men, looking back upon life, seem disposed to be thankful *on their own account*, and to acknowledge that goodness and mercy have followed them all the days of their lives. They have not been "dealt with according to their sins," but have many a time been set free from nets of their own weaving, and helped out of the mire and clay of vice and passion. Viewed from *within*, such appears to be the common testimony concerning every good man's career. It is the inexplicable mysteries in the destinies of their neighbours, as viewed *from outside*, and (as I have just said) the sufferings of the harmless brutes, which cause such men now to doubt God, and think the world evil. Satan tempted the old Chaldæan by heaping afflictions on his own person. He tries the modern Job more cunningly,—by giving him,

Asmodeus-fashion, a wide bird's-eye view of the woes and wrongs of other people.

To descend from the general proclivities of our age, to those of individuals towards Pessimism, the same paradox may be observed. As it is by no means altogether a bad sign of the times that there is a keener consciousness afloat of the extent to which pain and wrong prevail in the world, so neither is it by any means an indication of a bad disposition when a man takes a dark view of human nature and of life. Timon may be a noble fellow, or very much the reverse. We must study him in both characters.

The noble Timon has started with an unusual share of generosity and sympathy, and has become embittered because he has found other men less good and true than himself. There is a certain average sincerity, average unselfishness, average generosity and gratitude common among men. He who has a little above the average of such fine qualities meets on all sides disappointment. He finds people who display selfishness, where, as a matter of

course, he would have sacrificed his own convenience or interest to theirs; people who are mean where he would have been liberal, and suspicious where he was as open as the day; and finally, people who return his kindness with an ingratitude inexplicable to his generous mind, rich in its own benevolence. What, then, can happen to our Timon, but to begin to mistrust those whom he finds so unlike himself, to shut himself from them (and so perhaps provoke their mistrust in turn), and very commonly to bestow much of his disappointed affections on animals on whose fidelity he finds he can more surely depend, and whose wrongs at the hands of cruel men still further deepen his disgust of his own kind? All this time another man whose generosity and sincerity were, at starting, a little below rather than above the average, has been passing through life pleasantly astonished to find that his neighbours will show him more kindness than (he is conscious) he would in their places display, and rather more than less honest than he has reckoned to find them. Thus, by a curious contradiction, the nobler-natured man is much more liable than the

baser to develop into the misanthrope; and it is the lofty kind of scorn and bitterness properly belonging to him which every Pessimist assumes, whether he truly feel it or not. It is always *sous entendu*, in all tirades against human nature, that the speaker is quite incapable of the weakness, folly, and wickedness he condemns, and that if he refers to the "dark side of Providence," *he* would have managed the universe on better principles. But it is extremely questionable whether we ought to give unlimited credit to the genuineness of the indignation of those gentlemen who denounce the evils of the world, but never stir a finger to remove them, and whose personal enjoyment of the good things of life —fine houses, clothes, dinners, pictures, brie-a-brac, pleasant conversation, and favourable reviews of their books—has manifestly never been clouded by their sombre sense of the dreadful destiny of mankind at large, nor their appetite for applause been impaired by their profound conviction of the folly and contemptibility of the people by whom it is offered.

A Timon, not at all of the nobler sort,

seems to have been that great light of recent German philosophy, Arthur Schopenhauer. As Schopenhauer died childless, it will, I hope, hurt the feelings of no one if we dissect his character candidly as that of the most prominent Pessimist of the age. It will be instructive, I think, to learn the "Notes" of such a character—to study, in short, of what kind of stuff (so to speak) a Pessimist is occasionally made. In justice we must carry in mind that Schopenhauer accomplished a good deal in the philosophic way, besides preaching Pessimism. He worked out a metaphysical system of considerable depth and ingenuity, one of the merits of which, at all events, may be accounted that it is readily applicable to quite other views than those of its author, respecting the nature and destiny of mankind. With this formidable system, elaborated in his great work, "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung," we have, however (happily for me, and probably for my reader), for our present purpose, no concern whatever, but only with his actions and character, such as Miss Zimmern, condensing the original

German memoirs, sketched in a life-like and transparently truthful manner, in her "Life of Schopenhauer."

The first "Note" of Schopenhauer's character, I should say, was his HEARTLESSNESS. He seems scarcely to have loved anybody—in any sense of the word worth considering—from his cradle to his grave. He made, indeed, after his father's death, much parade of respect for his memory, but his filial piety, such as it was, stopped short at this point. He disliked his sprightly, good-natured mother, and treated her with singular insolence. As to friendship, he avowed his opinion that "Men of much intellectual worth, more especially if they have genius, can have but few friends;" and he verified his own dictum as a first-rate genius, by having, so far as we may judge, no real friends at all; though in later life, when he became celebrated, he had numerous flatterers and disciples. Love was even less in Schopenhauer's way than friendship, unless we are to call by the title the passion in its coarsest form. His opinion was that "the poetry of Love is mainly illusion, a glit-

tering drapery meant to mantle the solemnity of the thing as it really is" (p. 222); and his actions were quite in accordance with this crass materialism. He led, his biographer states, "no saintly ascetic life, nor did he pretend to this eminence. He despised women. He was only different to ordinary men in that he spoke of what others suppressed, and his over-zealous disciples who saw the god-like in all his acts, even dragged these to the light of day." His "careless dallying with beauty" (a euphemism, I presume, for a loose life) but once brought him to wish for a permanent union. The only woman whom he is recorded to have desired to marry, was an actress, who at the time he was "enraptured with her," was (fit position for the wife of a great moral philosopher!) the recognized mistress of Duke Carl August.

It has sometimes happened that men who have been lacking in those family and friendly affections, which are the most beautiful things in human life, have yet almost atoned for their deficiency by their fervent "Enthusiasm of Humanity." It is needless to say that Schopenhauer's character displayed an impar-

tial negation of both orders of feeling. He neither loved men nor women in particular, nor Man in general. He carefully defined himself to be, not a Misanthrope, only a Despiser of Men (p. 83). The higher a man stood mentally, he thought, the lower must his fellow-men appear. That it was the divine part of the greatest to serve the least, was the very last suggestion which would have occurred to his mind. "I read," he observed, "in the face of the Apollo Belvidere, the just and deep displeasure felt by the god of the Muses for the wretched obstinacy of the Philistines;" and doubtless Arthur Schopenhauer figuratively drew himself up and felt as like the Apollo Belvidere as the corporeal circumstances of a German philosopher might permit.

He was "penetrated with the conviction that he had been placed in a world peopled with beings morally and intellectually contemptible, from whom he must keep apart." In his note-book (of rather a different cast from that of Marcus Aurelius), he wrote this piece of self-counsel: "Study to acquire an accurate and connected view of the utter

despicability of mankind in general, then of your contemporaries, and of German scholars in particular."

The second "Note" in Schopenhauer's character was his exceeding COWARDICE. The modern Socrates would have deserted Athens at the Plague, and run away at Potidæa. With what poltroonery he would have behaved when required to drink the hemlock, it is impossible to imagine. When his country was in the throes of war and political crises, Schopenhauer always carefully moved out of the way. When there was any kind of infectious disease prevalent, he fled to another city, so that half his journeys were mere panic flights. He left Berlin for fear of the cholera, Naples from alarm of the small-pox, and Verona because he took it into his head that his snuff was poisoned. He slept with loaded pistols close to his hand, and seized them at the slightest noise. When the postman brought him a letter, he started. He used a cup of his own, to avoid the contagion which might lurk in a glass at a public table. He labelled his valuables with deceptive names, and wrote his business memoranda in Greek.

As we have seen, he was not bellicose. Only once in his life is it recorded that he struck a blow, and that was at a woman. Finding an acquaintance of his landlady presumptuous enough to hold a coffee-party in his anteroom, Schopenhauer knocked her down with such violence that her right arm was permanently disabled. Any other man, who had committed an act of similar brutality in a moment of passion would probably have hastened to offer some compensation to his victim; but our philosopher, on the contrary, hotly contested the poor woman's suit for legal redress, and quitted the town in disgust when he found himself compelled to maintain her for life—a period which (the non-sympathetic reader will rejoice to learn) was extremely prolonged. The writer of an exceedingly able and thoughtful review of Schopenhauer's philosophy in the *Contemporary Review*, some years age, observed that his unamiable traits are best excused by his own candid avowal that he liked his own mental physiognomy well enough, but his moral not at all. The *unalterableness of the natural character* was one of his favourite dogmas.

Certainly, the self-training by which many a naturally nervous temperament has disciplined itself into courage, a selfish one into generosity, and a morose or peevish temper into gentleness, was as far as possible from Schopenhauer's plan of life; and it opens to us a rather alarming idea of the socicty of the future, if his followers generally should resolve to adopt his facile principle, and assume that their "natural characters," whatever they may chance to be—selfish, false, dissolute, or cruel —are "unalterable." Such liberty, however, is probably reserved for those who may claim to be "men of genius" like their master, since he absolved himself from the ordinary duties incumbent on meaner mortals, by the help of a theory which we may call the Philosopher's Antinomianism. "He weighed his duties towards the world," we are told, "in the balance with the weight and intensity of his natural gifts, and he came to the conclusion that a man gifted with genius by merely being and working, sacrifices himself for all mankind; therefore he is free from the obligation of sacrificing himself in particular individually.

On this account, he may ignore claims which others are bound to fulfil.*

But the third "Note" was, I venture to think, the true key of Schopenhauer's character. It was ARROGANCE. The philosophers, whom the world has hitherto honoured, have been generally noted for the opposite quality. As saints learn humility by gazing up at infinite holiness above them, so sages acquire modesty by looking out on the boundless ocean of truth, beside which their greatest discoveries appear but as the pebbles which the child gathers by the shore. But the philosophers who are so good as to enlighten us in these days scarcely belong to the antiquated type of either a Socrates or a Newton. The pride and conceit of Arthur Schopenhauer, at all events, commenced in boyhood, and seems to have grown like a snowball till he died of old age. His mother (described as a woman of "modest, pleasing manners," and amiable character, who received habitually in her house such men as Goethe, the Schlegels, Grimm, and Wieland) depicts him thus, when

* "Life," p. 80.

a lad yet engaged in collegiate studies: "Your ill-humour, your complaints of things inevitable, your sullen looks, the extraordinary opinions you utter *like oracles which none may presume to contradict*, all this depresses me. Your eternal quibbles, your laments over the stupid world and human misery, give me bad nights and unpleasant dreams."* This little preliminary glance at the youth of twenty enables us to judge what value should be attached to the plea urged on his behalf, that his arrogance and bitterness were but the natural results of the neglect with which his great book was received by an unappreciative public and a jealous *cóterie* of offended philosophers, the "necessary armour of scorn and self-defence" which enabled him to hold his ground. The boy at college, it seems, long before he had written a work to instruct the world, or had experienced anything but kindness and prosperity, the healthy, rich, gifted and independent young lad, was already habitually "lamenting over the stupid world and human misery," and uttering, with "sullen

* "Life," p. 32.

looks," "oracles which none may presume to contradict."

As he grew older, Schopenhauer learned to express his good opinion of himself and his works with serenest equanimity. No more *naif* expressions of self-complacency have perhaps ever been penned than this gentleman's eulogiums on his own productions; as, for example, when he writes to the publisher of his work, that its "worth and importance are so great that *I do not venture to express it* even towards you, because you could not believe me," and proceeds to quote a review "which speaks of me with the highest praise, and says that I am plainly the greatest philosopher of the age, which is really *saying much less than the good man thinks*." "Sir," he said to an unoffending stranger who watched him across a *table d'hôte* (where he habitually acted the part of local "Lion"), "Sir, you are astonished at my appetite. True, I eat three times as much as you, but then, *I have three times as much mind!*" (p. 159). The reader who thinks that this speech could never have been spoken except in jest, and to produce a

good-humoured laugh, has not yet studied Schopenhauer's saturnine temperament, to which a joke at his own expense must have been quite inconceivable. To others, perhaps, such barbarous intellectual insolence may seem a pardonable reaction from the tone of self-depreciation (often exceedingly insincere) which modern manners have enforced. But the old classic pride was a very different thing from Schopenhauer's aggressive arrogance, wherewith he managed to blend gross and egregious vanity in quite a novel combination. *On a les défauts de ses qualités*, but not usually together two, apparently contradictory, defects. In our simplicity we should have anticipated that the man who considered himself the greatest philosopher of his age, and talked about the "loneliness of the heights" of intellectual grandeur, would have disdained to trouble himself about such miserable things as common newspaper reviews. We should have been, however, much mistaken in such a guess. "Schopenhauer (we are told) began to read German newspapers, now that they wrote about him. He caused the veriest trifle that contained his name to be sent to him.

He looked through all philosophical works for a mention of himself. His intense contempt for women wavered when he saw they could feel interest in his works." What would Aristotle's "Magnanimous Man" have said to this kind of littleness? "Honour, from any other person" (than the good) "or on the score of trifles, he will utterly despise, and likewise he will despise dishonour."*

Let it be remembered, too, that this was in Schopenhauer's old age. For a *young* author to be nervously excited about the reception of his works is nothing blameworthy or ridiculous. He is looking for the confirmation of the yet uncertain whispers of his own consciousness of ability, or to the extinction of his hopes. But this exculpation cannot apply to a man advanced in life and of established literary reputation, whose opinion of his own exalted gifts had been fully expanded while he was yet a lad at college.

Is it too much to say that in this inordinate opinion of his own powers and merits lies the secret of this man's Pessimism, of his contempt of other men, of his discontent with life, of

* "Ethics," B. IV, c. iii.

his revolt against Providence? It is not wonderful that a man who looks on his fellows like Apollo Belvidere, slaying them with the arrows of his scorn, should find them wretched and unlovable; for no man, however humble, is ever truly seen by him who looks *down* on him, and thus lacks all the insight of love and sympathy, and all the charity of one who forgives as he hopes to be forgiven. It is not wonderful that a man who estimates himself as supremely wise, and condones his own faults on the score of the unalterableness of natural character, should survey the world and find it a godless desert. Probably no human heart ever yet bloomed out into gratitude even under the brightest sunshine of prosperity, which had not once been ploughed up by self-reproach and softened by tears of repentance. In truth, any kind of religious sense is well nigh incompatible with such pride as we are discussing. The doors whereby other men enter the Temple—the tender guidance of human affection — the awful strife of the higher self against passion and sin,—the sacred moral ambition after yet unattained purity and goodness — all these

are closed to him. Schopenhauer's religious history is a confirmation of the truth that it is not the marble-palace mind of the philosopher which God will visit, so often as the humble heart which lies sheltered from the storms of passion, and all trailed over by the sweet blossoms of human affections.

It is actually ludicrous to compare this man's intensely selfish, vain, cowardly character with the magnificent compliments which he paid to virtue in the abstract, and to the ideal he draws of the perfect man, or "ascetic," in whom the very sense of individuality, not to speak of self-regard, is annihilated. "He will no longer regard himself as a real existence, comprised within the rigid line of personality, and thus insulated and differentiated from the rest of the universe. He will regard his separate being as a mere transitory phenomenon, a temporary objectivation of the sole real existence, and this recognition of his true position must necessarily destroy selfishness.

When a man ceases to draw an egotistic distinction between himself and others, and takes as much part in their sorrows as in his own, it naturally follows that such an one,

recognizing his own self in all beings, must regard the endless griefs of all beings as his own, and thus appropriate to himself the sorrows of the whole world."* The modern "Man of Sorrows" (if we may venture on so irreverent a comparison for the sake of the contrast), had, for his own use, an easy method of "appropriating" the griefs of his kind. "We gather," says his keen-sighted critic of the *Contemporary Review*, "from the accounts of his disciples that he had arranged for himself an existence more than tolerable, for, while free from positive annoyance, he found a perfectly consistent and legitimate source of pleasure in the disinterested contemplation of the Idea of the world's sorrows."† A more easy form of martyrdom it is hard to imagine.

Is it not somewhat surprising that a man like this, who, to do him justice, made no pretence of practising what he taught, but said openly, with cynical effrontery, "I preach sanctity, but I am no Saint,"‡ should have exercised any influence over his generation?

* "Life," p. 208. † *Contemporary Review*, Feb. 1873.
‡ "Life," p. 108.

We read, however, that "his little band of disciples grew, and their fanaticism reached a ludicrous point. One entreated him to found a Trust for the purpose of keeping watch that no syllable of his works should ever be altered; another had his portrait painted, and placed in a room like a chapel,"* etc. etc.

This particular hero-worship is, to my thinking, so portentous, that I have been tempted thus to study it at some length. For thousands of years the human race has gone on adding one noble type to another in its Pantheon—the old heathen patriotism and heroism of a Theseus, a Codrus, a Curtius, a Regulus, the modest wisdom of a Socrates, and the stoic grandeur of a Marcus Aurelius. Christianity added yet saintlier virtues to the ideal,—the charity, the purity, the religious fervour, and martyr devotion of a whole Army of Saints. Yet all these "stars of our mortal night" can, it seems, be obscured and forgotten, and men who might have known and honoured and followed them, like the Magi of old, prefer to dance after such a flaring link-light as Schopenhauer lifted over

* "Life," p. 240.

his own head! Observing this, and how his desolate doctrine is gaining ground, and recognizing not a few of his personal characteristics (more especially his arrogance) among other thinkers nearer home, we are tempted to turn back fondly and regretfully to the humblest old-fashioned goodness. Many of us had confidently trusted that when Knowledge increased, Wisdom and Love would grow along with it; that, without losing the sacred lessons of the past, mankind would obtain still deeper insight into moral truth, and that phases of character would appear more beautiful, more joyous, more perfectly rounded in all the gifts and graces of humanity than the world yet has seen—the long-severed virtues of the Hero and the Saint combined at last.

Alas! if Schopenhauers are to increase and multiply amongst us, these hopes have been visionary, indeed! As his character emerges from his biography, and stands clearly revealed to sight, memories of many a man and woman of small account in the world, rise up and range themselves in our thoughts for comparison opposite to this great philosopher. We

remember those who, instead of flying from the terrors of pestilence or war, have freely gone to meet them at the call of benevolence or patriotism. We remember those who, instead of finding their fellow-men "despicable," have been lifelong loving friends, faithful and tender husbands, devoted parents and children, ardent philanthropists sacrificing wealth and health and every enjoyment that they might relieve and bless the most miserable of mankind—the criminal, the diseased, the vicious and abandoned. We remember those who, instead of resting self-satisfied with the "unalterableness" of their own moral defects, have striven day and night, like the Pilgrim fighting on his knees against Apollyon, to purify their hearts of every stain, and, instead of arraigning Providence because their merits were insufficiently rewarded, have blessed God most of all for their afflictions. We remember all these, and also we remember the glory of peace and patience on their pain-worn faces; and from the depths of our souls comes the verdict that the dullest "Philistine" of them all was, in the scale of true nobleness, worth a thousand Pessimist philosophers.

Schopenhauer was, in truth, the best illustration which could be found of the fallacy of the modern Intellect-worship, the idolatry of mere mental Force, which is scarcely less stupid and ignoble than the idolatry of the physical Force of winds or waters. As baseness is more contemptible in a king, and miserliness in a millionaire, so are all moral faults and littlenesses only more despicable when set on the pedestal of genius. There are minds—and Schopenhauer's was one of them—whose brilliancy is that of a lighthouse. Its best use is to disclose the cold and troubled sea, and the dreary rocks whereon the unwary might make shipwreck.

The question, "How far is Pessimism *true*, and how far does the actual state of the world justify us in pronouncing Life to be an Evil?" is far too vast and too solemn to be treated in this brief paper. One remark only must be made in abatement of the wide-sweeping denunciations of the present order of things in which Pessimists habitually indulge. If we take count of their arguments, we shall find that at least one third are built on the

assumption (which nothing in genuine philosophy warrants) that the "hypothesis of a God" involves the attribution to Him not only of supreme but of *absolute* Power, and generally of a Power which includes self-contradictions. We should sweep away no inconsiderable number of difficulties if we could get fairly out of reach of this ever-recurring fallacy, and hear no more that God ought to make every creature absolutely happy, and also absolutely virtuous; and illume the martyr's glory, while invariably extinguishing the martyr's pile. And again, another third of the arguments of Pessimists rests on the yet more egregious and fundamental mistake that suffering is always to be accounted an evil, and may be lawfully weighed by them as such in holding the scales of the world. The truth, that it is "good to have been afflicted," that out of pain and grief and disappointment arise the purest virtues, the tenderest sympathies, the loftiest courage, the divinest faith—this thrice-blessed truth, the very alphabet of spiritual experience, is, as a rule, quite overlooked by great philosophers of the order of Schopenhauer.

When all corrections and deductions are made, a residue of profound, awful, inexplicable misery—misery of sinful man, and misery of sinless brutes—remains, alas! to form, doubtless, in time to come, as in the ages which are past, the dread "Riddle of the painful Earth." We must expect it to press upon us ever more and more in proportion as our sense of justice and love rises higher, and our sympathies with unmerited suffering grow more acute. Whether the shadow which that mystery casts on religion will hereafter be in any degree relieved by fresh lights obtained through sounder theories of Nature, it were idle to guess. One thing seems clear enough, namely, that the spirit wherewith some modern Pessimists approach the tremendous problem is one which can never lead to its solution, and which in itself is calculated to form no inconsiderable addition to the gloom of human existence. The world to all who enter it, is very much what their anticipations make of it; full of matter for joy and gratitude, or for repining and discontent. It appears beautiful, or dreary, according as they regard it through the cloudless, childlike eyes of cheer-

ful trust, or through the dim and distorting spectacles of doubt and despair. No generation so miserable has yet seen the light as one which should be trained to expect neither justice nor love from God, and to "cultivate a connected view of the general despicability of mankind."

After all, as Schopenhauer himself confessed (though he cared so little to practise the lesson), Character—or, as Mr. Matthew Arnold would say, Conduct—is the great matter to which all theories are subordinate. "Moral goodness belongs to an order of things which is above this life, and is incommensurable with any other perfection." There is a certain value in the old test whereby a tree is known by its fruits. To such of us as have kept any foundations of faith still standing, the presumption is surely enormous, that the intellectual system which naturally produces courage, trustfulness, and loving-kindness, must be nearer to the Eternal Verities, than the blighting theory which brings forth such thorns and thistles as deformed the character of the great Pessimist Philosopher of the nineteenth century.

ZOOPHILY.

ZOOPHILY.

It is a comforting reflection in a world still "full of violence and cruel habitations," that the behaviour of men to domestic animals must have been, on the whole, more kind than the reverse. Had it been otherwise, the "set" of the brute's brains, according to modern theory, would have been that of shyness and dread of us, such as is actually exhibited by the rabbit which we chase in the field, and the rat we pursue in the cupboard. In countries where cats are exceptionally ill-treated (*e.g.*, the South of France), poor puss is almost as timid as a hare, while the devotion and trustfulness of the dog towards man in every land peopled by an Aryan race seem to prove that, with all our faults, he has not found us such bad masters after all. Dogs love us, and could only love us, because we

have bestowed on them some crumbs of love and goodwill, though their generous little hearts have repaid the debt a thousandfold. The "Shepherd's Chief Mourner" and "Grey Friar's Bobby" had probably received in their time only a few pats from the horny hands of their masters, and a gruff word of approval when the sheep had been particularly cleverly folded. But they recognized that the superior being condescended to care for them, and their adoring fidelity was the ready response.*

Two different motives of course have influenced men to such kindness to domestic animals, one being obvious self-interest, and the necessity, if they needed the creature's

* A touching story of such sheep gathering was recently told me on good authority. A shepherd lost his large flock on the Scotch mountains in a fog. After fruitless search he returned to his cottage, bidding his collie find the sheep if she could. The collie, who was near giving birth to her young, understood his orders and disappeared in the mist, not returning for many hours. At last she came home in miserable plight, driving before her the last stray sheep, and carrying in her mouth a puppy of her own! She had of necessity left the rest of her litter to perish on the hills, and in the intervals of their birth the poor beast had performed her task and driven home the sheep. Her last puppy only she had contrived to save.

services, to keep it in some degree of health and comfort ; and the other being the special affection of individual men for favourite animals. Of the frequent manifestation of this latter sentiment in all ages literature and art bear repeated testimony. We find it in the parable of Nathan ; in the pictured tame lion running beside the chariot of Rameses ; in the story of Argus in the "Odyssey;" in the episode in the "Mahabharata," where the hero refuses to ascend to heaven in the car of Indra without his dog ; in the exquisite passage in the "Zend Avesta," where the Lord of Good speaks to Zoroaster: "For I have made the dog, I who am Ahura Mazda ;" in the history of Alexander's hero Bucephalus ; in Pliny's charming tales of the boy and the pet dolphin, and of the poor slave thrown down the Gemonian stairs, beside whose corpse his dog watched and wailed till even the stern hearts of the Roman populace were melted to pity.

But neither the everyday self-interested care of animals by their masters, nor the occasional genuine affection of special men to favourite animals—which have together produced the

actual tameness most of the domesticated tribes now exhibit—seems to have led men to the acknowledgement of moral obligation on their part towards the brutes. As a lady will finger lovingly a bunch of flowers, and the next moment drop it carelessly on the roadside, or pluck the blossoms to pieces in sheer thoughtlessness, so the great majority of mankind have always treated animals.

> We tread them to death, and a troop of them dies
> Without our regard or concern,

cheerfully remarked Dr. Watts concerning ants; but he might have said the same of our "unconcern" in the case of the cruel destruction of thousands of harmless birds and beasts, and the starvation of their young; and of the all-but-universal recklessness of men in dealing with creatures not representing value in money.

It is not, however, to be reckoned as surprising that our forefathers did not dream of such a thing as Duty to Animals. They learned very slowly that they owed duties to *men* of other races than their own. Only on the generation which recognized thoroughly for the first time (thanks in great measure to

Wilberforce and Clarkson) that the Negro was "a man and a brother," did it dawn that beyond the Negro there were other still humbler claimants for benevolence and justice. Within a few years passed both the Emancipation of the West Indian slaves and that first Act for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of which Lord Erskine so truly prophesied that it would prove "not only an honour to the Parliament of England, but an era in the civilization of the world."

But the noble law of England, which thus forestalled the moralists and set an example which every civilized nation, with one solitary exception, has followed—remains even to this day, after sixty years, still in advance of the systematic teachers of human duty. Even while every year sermons specially inculcating humanity to animals are preached all over the kingdom, nobody (so far as the present writer is aware) has attempted formally to include Duty to the Lower Animals in any complete system of ethics as an organic part of the Whole Duty of Man.*

* The best effort to supply the missing chapter of ethics, is the charming and eloquent volume, "Rights of

Without pretending for a moment to fill up this gap in ethics, I would fain offer to those who are interested in the subject, a suggestion which may possibly serve as a scaffolding till the solid edifice be built by stronger hands. We must perchance yet wait to determine what are the right *actions* of man to brute; but I do not think we need lose much time in deciding what must be the right *sentiment:* the general feeling wherewith it is fit we should regard the lower animals. If we can but clearly define that sentiment, it will indicate roughly the actions which will be consonant therewith.

In the first place it seems to me that a

an Animal," by E. B. Nicholson. I thankfully recognize the candour wherewith the author has tackled the difficult problems of the case, and the value of his demonstration that the law of England assumes the fundamental principle that cruelty to an animal is an offence *per se*, and that it is not necessary to show that it injures any human owner or spectator. In this respect, as in all others, our Act (11 & 12 Vict. c. 39) immeasurably transcends the French *Loi Grammont*, which condemns only cruelty exhibited in public places and painful to the spectators. Mr. Nicholson justifies Vivisection only so far as it can be rendered absolutely painless by anæsthetics. To such of us as have seen through that delusion, *cadit quæstio.*

sense of serious responsibility towards the brutes ought to replace our "lady-and-the-nosegay" condition of *insouciance*. The "ages before morality" are at an end at last, even in this remote province of human freedom. Of all the grotesque ideas which have imposed on us in the solemn phraseology of divines and moralists, none is more absurd than the doctrine that our moral obligations stop short where the object of them does not happen to know them; and assures us that, because the brutes cannot call us to account for our transgressions, nothing that we can do will constitute a transgression. To absolve us from paying for a pair of boots because our bootmaker's ledger had unluckily been burned, would be altogether a parallel lesson in morality. It is plain enough, indeed, that the creature who is (as we assume) without a conscience or moral arbitrament, must always be exonerated from guilt, no matter what it may do of hurt or evil; and the judicial proceedings against, and executions of, oxen and pigs in the Middle Ages for manslaughter were unspeakably absurd. But not less absurd, on the other side, is it to exonerate men, who

have consciences and free will, when they are guilty of cruelty to brutes, on the plea—not that *they*—but the brutes, are immoral and irresponsible.*

A moral being is not moral on one side of him only, but moral *all round*, and towards all who are above, beside, and beneath him; just as a gentleman is a gentleman not only to the king but to the peasant; and as a truthful man speaks truth to friend and stranger. Just in the same way the "merciful man is merciful to his beast," as he is merciful to the beggar at his gate. I may add that every noble quality is specially tested by its exhibition in those humbler directions wherein there is nothing to be gained by showing it, and nothing to be lost by contrary behaviour.

There is a passage from Jeremy Bentham, quoted in Mrs. Jamieson's "Common Place Book" and elsewhere, which will recur to many readers at this point. "The day may come,"

* As a recent example of this doctrine, see an article in the *Fortnightly Review* for February 1, 1882. "Is it not," the author says, "the very basis of ethical doctrine (!) that the moral rights of any being depend on its ethical nature?"

he says, "when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny. It may come one day to be recognized that the number of legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum* are reasons insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the caprice of a tormentor. The question is not, Can they reason? or Can they speak? but Can they suffer?"

Long before Bentham, a greater mind, travelling along a nobler road of philosophy, laid down the canon which resolves the whole question. Bishop Butler affirmed that it was on the simple fact of a creature being SENTIENT—*i.e.*, capable of pain and pleasure—that rests our responsibility to save it pain and give it pleasure. There is no evading this obligation, then, as regards the lower animals, by the plea that they are not moral beings. It is *our* morality, not *their's*, which is in question. There are special considerations which in different cases may modify our obligation, but it is on such special reasons, not on the universal non-moral nature of the

brutes (as the old divines taught), that our exoneration must be founded; and the onus lies on us to show cause for each of them.

The distinction between our duties to animals and our duties to our human fellow-creatures lies here. As regards them both we are indeed forbidden to inflict avoidable pain, because both alike are sentient. But as regards the brutes, our duties *stop* there; whereas, as regards men, they being moral as well as sentient beings, our primary obligations towards them must concern their higher natures, and include the preservation of the lives which those higher natures invest with a sanctity exclusively their own. Thus we reach the important conclusion that the infliction of avoidable Pain is the supreme offence as regards the lower animals, but *not* the supreme offence as regards man. Sir Henry Taylor's noble lines go to the very root of the question :—

> Pain, terror, mortal agonies, which scare
> Thy heart in man, to brutes thou wilt not spare.
> Are theirs less sad and real? *Pain in man*
> *Bears the high mission of the flail and fan;*
> *In brutes 'tis purely piteous.*

Pain is the one supreme evil of the existence of the lower animals; an evil which (so far as we can see) has no countervailing good. As to Death—a painless one, so far from being the supreme evil to them, is often the truest mercy. Thus instead of the favourite phrase of certain physiologists, that "they would put hecatombs of brutes to torture to save the smallest pain of a man," true ethics bid us regard man's *moral* welfare only as of supreme importance, and anything which can injure *it* (such, for example, as the practice, or sanction of the practice, of cruelty) as the worst of evils, even if along with it should come a mitigation of bodily pain. On this subject the present Bishop of Winchester has put the case in a nutshell. "It is true," he said, "that Man is superior to the beast, but the part of Man which we recognize as such is his moral and spiritual nature. So far as his body and its pains are concerned, there is no particular reason for considering them more than the body and bodily pains of a brute."

Of course the ground is cut from under us in this whole line of argument by those ingenious thinkers who have recently dis-

interred (with such ill-omened timeliness for the vivisection debate) Descartes' supposed doctrine, that the appearance of pain and pleasure in the brutes is a mere delusion, and that they are only automata—"a superior kind of marionettes which eat without pleasure, cry without pain, desire nothing, know nothing, and only simulate intelligence as a bee simulates a mathematician." If this conclusion on which modern science is to be congratulated be accepted, it follows of course that we should give no more consideration to the fatigue of a noble hunter than to the creaking wood of a rocking-horse; and that the emotions a child bestows on its doll will be more serious than those we bestow on a dog who dies of grief on his master's grave. Should it appear to us, however, on the contrary (as it certainly does to me) that there is quite as good evidence that dogs and elephants reason as that certain physiologists reason, and a great deal better evidence that they—the animals—feel, we may perhaps dismiss the Cartesianism of the Nineteenth Century, and proceed without further delay to endeavour to define more particularly the fitting

sentiment of man to sentient brutes. We have seen we ought to start with a distinct sense of some degree of moral responsibility as regards them. What shape should that sense assume?

We have been in the habit of indulging ourselves in all manner of antipathies to special animals, some of them having, perhaps, their source and *raison d'être* in the days of our remote but not illustrious ancestors,

> When wild in woods the noble savage ran;

or those of a still earlier date, who were, as Mr. Darwin says, "arboreal in their habits," ere yet we had deserved the reproach of having "made ourselves tailless and hairless and multiplied folds to our brain." Other prejudices, again, are mere personal whims, three-fourths of them being pure affectation. A man will decline to sit in a room with an inoffensive cat, and a lady screams at the sight of a mouse, which is infinitely more distressed at the *rencontre* than she. I have known an individual, otherwise distinguished for audacity, "make tracks" across several fields to avoid a placidly ruminating cow. In our present stage of civilization these silly

prejudices are barbarisms and anachronisms, if not vulgarisms, and should be treated like exhibitions of ignorance or childishness. For our remote progenitors before mentioned, tusky and hirsute, struggling for existence with the cave bear and the mammoth in the howling wilderness of a yet uncultured world, there was no doubt justification for regarding the terrible beasts around them with the hatred which comes of fear. But the animal creation, at least throughout Europe, has been subdued for ages, and all its tribes are merely dwellers by sufferance in a vanquished province. Their position as regards us appeals to every spark of generosity alight in our bosoms, and ought to make us ashamed of our whims and antipathies towards beings so humble. Shall man arrogate the title of "lord of creation" and not show himself at the least *bon prince* to his poor subjects? It is not too much to ask that, even towards wild animals, our feelings should be those of royal clemency and indulgence—of pleasure in the beauty and grace of such of them as are beautiful; of admiration for their numberless wondrous instincts; of sympathy with

their delight in the joys of the forest and the fields of air. Few, I suppose, of men with any impressionability can watch a lark ascending into the sky of a summer's morning without some dim echo of the feelings which inspired Shelley's Ode. This is, however, only a specially vivid instance of a sympathy which might be almost universal, and which, so far as we learn to feel it, touches all nature for us with a magic wand.

If we are compelled to fight with them—if they are our natural enemies and can never be anything else—then let us wage war upon them in loyal sort, as we contended against the Russians at Balaclava; and if we catch any prisoners, deal with them chivalrously, or at least mercifully. This, indeed (to do justice to sportsmen, much as I dislike their pursuit), I have always observed to be the spirit of the old-fashioned country gentleman, before the gross slaughtering of *battues* and despicable pigeon-matches were heard of in the land.

As to domestic animals, their demands on us, did we read them aright, are not so much those of petitioners for Mercy as of rightful

claimants of Justice. We have caused their existence, and are responsible that they should be on the whole happy and not miserable. We take their services to carry our burdens, to enhance our pleasures, to guard our homes and our flocks. In the case of many of them we accept the fondest fidelity and an affection such as human beings scarcely give once in a lifetime. They watch for us, work for us, bear often weary imprisonment and slavery in our service, and not seldom mourn for us with breaking hearts when we die. If we conceive of an Arbiter sitting by and watching alike our behaviour and the poor brutes' toil and love, can we suppose he would treat it as merely a piece of *generosity* on our part, which we were free to leave unfulfilled without blame, that we should behave considerately to such an humble friend, supply him with food, water, and shelter, forbear to overwork him, and end his harmless life at last with the least possible pain? Would he not demand it of us as the simplest matter of *justice*?*

* I have endeavoured elsewhere to work out this hypothesis of an Umpire between man and brute, as a method of helping us to a solution of the problem of what are, and what are not, lawful actions on our parts

For those who accept the Darwinian theory, and believe that the relationship between man and the brutes is not only one of similarity, but of actual kinship in blood, it would have seemed only natural that this new view should have brought forth a burst of fresh sympathy and tenderness. If our physical frames, with all their quivering nerves and susceptibilities to a thousand pains, be indeed only the four-footed creature's body a little modified by development; if our minds only overlap and transcend theirs, but are grown out of those humbler brains; if all our moral qualities, our love and faith and sense of justice, be only their affection and fidelity and dim sense of wrong extended into wider realms,—then we bear in ourselves the irresistible testimony to their claims on our sympathy. And if, like so many of the disciples of the same new philosophy, we are unhappy enough to believe that both man and brute when laid in the grave awake no more, then, above all, it would

towards animals. The reader who may be interested in the inquiry may obtain my pamphlet, the "Right of Tormenting," price 2*d*, at the office of the Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection, 1, Victoria Street, Westminster.

seem that this common lot of a few pleasures and many pains, to be followed by annihilation, would move any heart to compassion. In the great, silent, hollow universe in which these souls believe themselves to stand, how base does it seem to turn on the weaker, unoffending beings around them and spoil their little gleam of life and joy under the sun!

Nothing is more startling to me than the fact that some of the leading apostles of this philosophy, and even its respected author himself, should in one and the same breath tell us that an ape, for example, is actually our own flesh and blood, and that it is right and proper to treat apes after the fashion of Professors Munk and Goltz and Ferrier. These gentlemen, as regards the poor *quadrumana*, are "rather more than kin, and rather less than kind."

For those who, whether they believe in Evolution or not, still hold faith in the existence of a Divine Lord of man and brute, the reasons for sympathy are, in another way, still stronger. That the Christian religion did not, from the first, like the Zoroastrian, Buddhist, and Brahminist, impress its followers

with the duty of mercy to the brutes—that it was left to a few tender-hearted saints, like St. Francis, to connect the creatures in any way with the worship of the Creator, and to the later development of Protestantism to formulate any doctrine on the subject of duty towards them—is a paradox which would need much space to explain. Modern religion, at all events, by whatever name it is called, seems tending more and more to throw an additional tender sacredness over our relations to the "unoffending creatures which He"—their Maker—"loves," and to make us recognize a latent truth in the curiously hackneyed lines of Coleridge concerning him who "prayeth best" and also loveth best "both man and bird and beast." Where that great and far-reaching softener of hearts, the sense of our own failures and offences, is vividly present, the position we hold to creatures who *have never done wrong* is always found inexpressibly touching. To be kind to them, and rejoice in their happiness, seems just one of the few ways in which we can act a godlike part in our little sphere, and display the mercy for which we hope in our turn. Whichever way

we take it, I conceive we reach the same conclusion. The only befitting feeling for human beings to entertain towards brutes is—as the very word suggests—the feeling of *Humanity;* or, as we may interpret it, the sentiment of Sympathy, so far as we can cultivate fellow-feeling; of Pity, so far as we know them to suffer; of Mercy, so far as we can spare their sufferings; of Kindness and Benevolence, so far as it is in our power to make them happy.

There is nothing fanatical about this Humanity. It does not call on us to renounce any of the useful or needful avocations of life as regards animals, but rather would it make the man imbued with it perform them all the better.* We assuredly need not, because we become humane, sacrifice the higher life for the lower, as in the wondrous Buddhist

* In fact, many men who pursue such trades, notably butchers, are genuinely humane, and do their best to get through their work in the most merciful way. Several of them have recently expressed warm satisfaction on obtaining Baxter's Mask, whereby oxen may be instantaneously killed without the chance of a misdirected blow. The mask is to be obtained from Mr. Baxter, Ealing Dean, W.

parable so beautifully rendered in the "Light of Asia," where "Lord Buddha," in one of his million lives, gives himself, out of pity, to be devoured by a famishing tiger who cannot feed her cubs, and

> the great cat's burning breath
> Mix'd with the last sigh of such fearless love.

We need not even copy the sweet lady in the "Sensitive Plant" who made the bees and moths and ephemeridæ her attendants:—

> But all killing insects and gnawing worms,
> And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
> She bore in a basket of Indian woof
> Into the rough woods far aloof,—
>
> In a basket of grasses and wild flowers full
> The softest her gentle hands could pull;
> For the poor banish'd insects, whose intent,
> Although they did ill, was innocent.

This is poetry not meant for practice, and yet even these hyperboles carry a breath as of Eden along with them. Of Eden, did I say? Nay, rather of the later Paradise for which the soul of the greatest of the prophets yearned, where "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

I will not attempt here to define how the sentiment of Humanity to the brutes,

thoroughly ingrained into a man's heart, would make him decide the question of field sports. My own impression is that it would lead him to abandon first, and with utter disgust, such wretched amusements as pigeon-matches and *battues* of half-tame pheasants; and later, those sports in which, as in fox-hunting and coursing and duck-shooting, the sympathy of the sportsman with his hounds and horse, or his greyhound or retriever, is uppermost in his mind, to the exclusion of the wild and scarcely seen object of his pursuit. In nine kinds of such sports, I believe, out of ten, it is rather a case of ill-divided sympathy for animals than of lack of it which inspires the sportsman; and not many would find enjoyment where neither horse nor dog had part—like poor Robertson, of Brighton, sitting for hours in a tub in a marsh to shoot wild duck, and counting the period so spent as "hours of delight!"

But there is one practice respecting which the influence of such a sentiment of humanity as we have supposed must have an unmistakable result. It must put an absolute stop to Vivisection. To accustom ourselves and

our children to regard animals with sympathy, to beware of giving them pain, and rejoice when it is possible for us to give them pleasure; to study their marvellous instincts, and trace the dawnings of reason in their sagacious acts; to accept their services and their affection, and give them in return such pledges of protection as our kind words and caresses,—to do this, and then calmly consent to hand them over to be dissected alive—this is too monstrous to be borne. *De deux choses l'une.* Either we must cherish animals—and then we must abolish Vivisection,—or we must sanction Vivisection; and then, for very shame's sake, and lest we poison the springs of pity and sympathy in our breasts and the breasts of our children, we must renounce the ghastly farce of petting or protecting animals, and pretending to recognize their noble and lovable qualities. If love and courage and fidelity, lodged in the heart of a dog, have no claim on us to prevent us from dissecting that heart even while yet it beats with affection; if the human-like intelligence working in a monkey's brain do not forbid (but rather invite) us to mutilate that brain, morsel by

morsel, till the last glimmering of mind and playfulness die out in dulness and death;—if this be so, then, in Heaven's name, let us at least have done with our cant of "humanity," and abolish our Acts of Parliament, and dissolve our Bands of Mercy and our three hundred Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty throughout the world.

The idea of Vivisection (to use the phrase of its two thousand advocates who memorialized Sir Richard Cross) rests on the conception of an animal (a dog, for example) as "a carnivorous creature, valuable for purposes of research"—a mechanism, in short, of nerves and muscles, bones and arteries, which, as they added, it would be a pity to "withdraw from investigation." The crass materialism which thus regards such a creature as a dog (and would, doubtless, if its followers spoke out, be found similarly to regard a man) is at the opposite pole of thought and feeling from the recognition of the animal in its higher nature as an object of our tenderness and sympathy. We cannot hold both views at once. If we take the higher one the lower must become abhorrent in our eyes. There is

—there ought to be—no question in the matter of a little more or a little less of torture, or of dispute whether anæsthetics, when they can be employed, usually effect complete and final, or only partial and temporary, insensibility; or of whether such processes as putting an animal into a stove over a fire till it expires in ten or twenty minutes ought to be called "baking it alive," or described by some less distressing and homely phraseology. It is the simple idea of dealing with a living, conscious, sensitive, and intelligent creature as if it were dead and senseless matter against which the whole spirit of true humanity revolts. It is the notion of such absolute despotism as shall justify, not merely taking life, but converting the entire existence of the animal into a misfortune, which we denounce as a brutal misconception of the relations between the higher and the lower creatures, and an utter anachronism in the present stage of human moral feeling. A hundred years ago, had physiologists frankly avowed that they recognized no claims on the part of the brutes which should stop them from torturing them, they would have been

only on the level of their contemporaries. But to-day they are behind the age; ay, sixty years behind the legislature and the poor Irish gentleman who "ruled the houseless wilds of Connemara," and had the glory of giving his name to Martin's Act. How their claim for a "free vivisecting table" may be looked back upon a century to come we may perhaps foretell with no great chance of error. In his last book, published ten years ago, Sir Arthur Helps wrote these memorable words: "It appears to me that the advancement of the world is to be measured by the increase of humanity and the decrease of cruelty.

I am convinced that if an historian were to sum the gains and losses of the world at the close of each recorded century, there might be much which was retrograde in other aspects of human life and conduct, but nothing could show a backward course in humanity" (pp. 195, 196). As I have said ere now, the battle of Mercy, like that of Freedom,

once begun,
Though often lost, is always won.

Even should all the scientific men in Europe unite in a Resolution that "Vivisection is

Necessary," just as all the Dominicans would have united three hundred years ago to resolve that *autos da fé* were "necessary," or as all the lawyers and magistrates that the *peine forte et dure* was "necessary," or as the statesmen of America did thirty years ago, that Negro Slavery was "necessary," yet the "necessity" will disappear in the case of the scientific torture of animals as in all the rest. The days of Vivisection are numbered.

SACRIFICIAL MEDICINE.

SACRIFICIAL MEDICINE.

THE world has done wrong to laugh at the old lady who reproved her sailor grandson for "telling her such a scandalous fib as that he had seen a fish fly in the air;" but restored her confidence to the hopeful youth when he proceeded to narrate how he had picked up a wheel of Pharaoh's chariot on the Red Sea shore. Practically we all jump easily at beliefs towards the level of which we have already climbed by previous knowledge (or previous prejudice, as it may chance), and refuse, donkey-wise, to budge an inch towards those which happen to be on a plane above our preconceived notions of what either is, or ought to be. It is this propensity, of course, which makes the most baseless calumny mischievous, by paving the way for the next slander against its object. And it is it, also, which grants interminable

leases of life to false systems of physics and religion, by securing a welcome for every fiction and fallacy which at any time may seem to favour them, and closing the door in the face of truths which militate against and might explode them.

A curious study of the "Grammar of Assent," as used by the majority of mankind in the matter which comes nearest to their own business and bosoms might, I think, be made by unearthing the preconceived notions and preparatory ideas which must needs exist as regards the Healing Art, and which can have enabled doctors confidently to prescribe, and patients meekly to accept, the horrid and shocking remedies in use from the earliest period; remedies of which it is a mild criticism to say that they were worse than the diseases they professed to cure. Had the minds of men concerned with medical inquiries been really free from antecedent convictions—blank sheets of paper whereon Nature could have written down her facts, which Experience might have read and collated—it is clear enough that good diet, exercise, and cleanliness, and the occasional use of simple preparations

of herbs, would early have constituted the primitive and sound rules of medical science; to be supplemented as time went on by discoveries of the therapeutic value of more rare vegetable substances, and of a few minerals. Never could practical observation, by any possibility, have suggested that it would be beneficial to a sick man to make him swallow potable gold, or powdered skulls, or a bolus of decomposed old toads and earthworms. The *un*-"scientific use of the imagination," can alone have dictated these and scores of no less absurd and obnoxious prescriptions, prompted by some *à priori* theory of what *ought*, antecedently to experience, to be suitable for the cure of disease, and "in accordance with the eternal fitness of things."

What, then, were the notions in obedience to which these marvellous remedies were ordained? If we exclude from present consideration all the really useful therapeutic agents, discovered doubtless by genuine experience and recorded by the ancient physicians, Galen and Hippocrates, Dioscorides and Avicenna, and all the rest, and also set aside those which, though not really useful, might

have been readily mistaken for being so by imperfect early observation—we find the immense residue of absurd and monstrous recipes to fall into two categories, namely, the remedies which were exceedingly Costly, and the remedies which were either very Painful or very Disgusting. In other words, a large part of the medical science of all past ages proves that the doctors and their patients valued remedies *in proportion to the price to be paid for them*, either in money or in suffering. In short, they adopted freely the Doctrine of Sacrifice as applied to medicine. Considering that Nature nearly always proceeds on precisely the opposite track—that she does not ask us "to do some great thing," but, like the true prophet, only bids us "wash and be clean;" makes the cheapest and commonest things the most wholesome, and affords us normally, by our instinctive desire or loathing, the surest test of the fitness or unfitness of food for our use—there is something exceedingly curious in the all but universal assumption of mankind that it was only necessary to find something particularly rare and expensive, or else something extraordinarily revolting, to obtain

a panacea for all the woes of mortality. It was ridiculous (in the estimation of our forefathers) to suppose that a great noble or king should dissolve pearls in his drink, or swallow liquid gold, and yet, forsooth! be no better after all than a poor wretch who could afford himself only a little milk or water. Still more incredible was it that a man should submit to some agonizing scarification or actual cautery, or should compel himself to bolt some inexpressibly disgusting mess which his doctor had taken a year to concoct and distil through a score of furnaces and retorts, and yet, when all was over, receive no more benefit than if he had endured no hardship, or had only drunk some cowslip julep or herb tea. Such tame and impotent conclusions could not be received for a moment. If patients would only *pay* enough or *suffer* enough, they *must* be cured. This, it really seems, was the underlying conviction of men of old, on which half the therapeutics of past times were unconsciously based.

Let us cull a few illustrations of the ingenious development of those principles by the invention of nostrums distinguished by one or

other of the grand characteristics, roughly definable as Costliness or Nastiness. Perhaps ere the close of our brief review we may find we have less reason than we fancy at starting to congratulate ourselves on the disappearance of this phase of human folly, or to rest assured that inductive science alone now rules in the sick-room, and that neither doctors nor patients retain any faith in Sacrificial Medicine.

The use of Costly things as remedies for disease, constitutes a kind of *Haute Médecine* necessarily of limited application. With the exception of the great search for the *Aurum Potabile* in the Middle Ages, there are much fewer traces of it than of the other form of sacrifice, in which the patient *payait de sa personne*. Everybody could be scarified or made to swallow worms and filth, but there were not many patients who could afford to pay for emeralds to tie on their stomachs in cases of dysentery, as recommended by Avenzor, nor for "eight grains of that noble lunar medicine, the wine of silver," or for "dissolved pearls," either of which (Matthioli assures us) is "sovereign against Melancholy." Dioscorides might in vain recommend pow-

dered sapphires for starting eyes, or St. Jerome vaunt their virtues for many other troubles, to the majority of sufferers in their own or any other age. Coral was more within popular reach, and probably a considerable number of believing souls have followed Galen's prescription and tried its use for spitting of blood, and Pliny's recommendation of it for the stone. Avicenna found that a cordial made of it is "singularly productive of joy," and Matthioli says it has "truly occult virtues against epilepsy," whether "hung about the neck or drunk in powders."* Emeralds or rubies,

* As the modern mind may be a little puzzled as to the mode in which some of these substances can be introduced into our internal economy, the following extract from the "Family Dictionary" of Dr. Salmon (1696) may throw light on the subject. "CORAL, to prepare.—Take such a quantity as ye think convenient. Make it into a fine powder by grinding it upon a Porphyry or an Iron Mortar. Drop on it by degrees a little rose-water, and form it into balls for use. After this manner Crabs-eyes, Pearl, Oister shells, and Preeious stones, are prepared to make up Cordials compounded of them and other suitable materials for the strengthening of the heart in fevers, or such like violent diseases, and to restore the Deeays of nature." Ebony is swallowed by rasping it in shavings and making a decoction.

and even silk (then a rarer substance in Europe than now) afford, according to Dioscorides, relief in a variety of ailments, but of course nothing could be so generally, and indeed universally, useful as gold. He who could discover how to make men actually drink the most costly of metals, would teach them nothing less than the secret of immortality. The Aurum Potabile, or noble "Solar Oyl," especially when mixed with the "Lunar Oyl" of silver, and Mercurial Oyl, forms, as Bolnest assures us, "a great Arcanum, fit to be used in most diseases, *especially in chronick*." By itself alone, indeed, the drinkable gold was understood to be an Elixir of Life—a conclusion not a little remarkable when we consider that the only real value of the metal is its convenience as a circulating medium, and for the fabrication of ornaments, and that the artificial importance thus attached to it must have so affected men's minds as to cause them to idealize it as a sort of divine antidote to disease and death.

In an earlier and truer hearted age, Paradise was believed to be a Garden, and it was the Fruit of a Tree of Life which would make

men live for ever. But when, as Gibbon satirically observes, in the dissolution of the Roman world, men coveted only a place in a Celestial City of gold and pearl, the secret of immortality was sought (not inappropriately) at the bottom of a Rosicrucian crucible.

There was, it must be confessed, a profound *vulgarity* in this whole system of Costly Medicine, which it would be flattering to ourselves to think we had in our day quite overpassed and discarded. But in truth, though we are not wont to dissolve pearls or powder emeralds, or drink Solar, or even Lunar "Oyl," it may be fairly asked whether we do not contrive to melt down a handful of sovereigns in every attack of illness, to very little better purpose than if we had simply given them to an old alchemist to put in his furnace and make for us an Elixir of Life? What are those long rows of items in our druggist's bill for draughts, embrocations, liniments, blisters, gargles, and what not, represented, when the housemaid clears our room for convalescence, by a whole regiment of quarter-emptied phials and pill-boxes on our table? What are those considerable

drafts recorded in our cheek-book, not only for the attendance of our customary medical adviser (which might be reasonable), but for the visits of the eminent consulting physician, brought down, perchance, fifty or five hundred miles to look at us for five minutes while we lay speechless in our fever? Did anybody ever use one-half, or even one-third, of the expensive medicines ordered in every illness from the pharmacy day after day? Or did anybody find a medical man, in view of a patient's straitened circumstances, telling his anxious friends that the remains of the last bottle of his physic would answer as well as a new one, or that they might readily change it, by adding a few drops of some fresh ingredient, instead of ordering another six ounces from the chemist, to be set aside in its turn half used, to-morrow? Or (what is still more to the purpose) did anybody ever hear of a case wherein the physician summoned for consultation (possibly at enormous cost) has given his honest opinion that the regular medical attendant of the patient has mistaken his case, and that the treatment ought to be altogether reversed?

The same idea has been at the bottom of our proceedings, and those of our ancestors which we ridicule—namely, that if we do but spend money enough a cure *must* follow.

But, as I remarked before, the notion that Costliness of itself is a test of medicinal virtue, has been necessarily far less prolific of results than the kindred idea that by the Pain and Disgust entailed on a patient, might be estimated the value of the remedy applied to his disease. As to disgust, it would really appear as if some ancient prophets of the healing art, some Phœbus Epicurios or Esculapius must have laid down as a principle for the selection of health-restoring compounds and concoctions: "By their nauseousness ye shall know them." Else were the recipes for all the hideous, abominable witch-broths, wherewith the older books of medicine are replete, quite unaccountable on any theory of human sanity. Many of them (which weak-souled patients have swallowed by the ounce and the pound) were of a kind which it is quite impossible to quote; nor can we wonder that, as Plato tells us, the Athenian physicians were wont to engage the great rhetorician Gorgias to

accompany them and persuade their patients to take their prescriptions. Let the following, however, be taken as moderate examples:—

"Take what Animal soever thy fancy best liketh, and thou thinkest most fit to prepare. Kill it and take it (but separate nothing of its impurities, as feathers, hoofs, hairs, or other heterogeneous substance); bruise all in a large and strong mortar to a fit consistency, put it then into a vessel for putrefaction, and put upon it of the blood of animals of the same kind so much as may well moisten it; or, which is better, cover it all over. Shut close the vessel, and set it to putrific, in *fimo equino* for forty dayes that it may ferment." (The result is to be distilled, calcined, rectified, and distilled over again and again, "seven times to separate its phlegme," till finally) "thou hast a pleasant (!!), safe and noble Animal Arcanum to fortifie the animal life, and restore health and vigour to its languishing spirit, till God doth call for its final dissolution and separation." — *Aurora Chymica*, p. 6.

This was bad enough, but a great advance (in the line of sacrifice) was made when to the mere odiousness, we may say beastliness, of the dose *per se*, could be added the horror of eating what had once formed part of a human body—in short, of cannibalism. The *ordonnances* which follow really seem to have a connection with ancient idol-rites of human sacrifice, and possibly (had we means of tracing

them) might be fathered on the earliest worshippers of Hesus or of Odin. The seasons of the year (Spring and Autumn) wherein the victim must die (very carefully defined in these prescriptions) seem to give colour to this view. Down to the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, Helps tells us, the Aztecs used yearly to slay a young man in spring, that the nobles might eat his heart as a sort of sacrament. Any way, it is rather startling to find that just two hundred years ago in London the Physician in Ordinary to the King recommended cannibalism to Englishmen without the smallest apology or hesitation!

A Mummiall Quintessence.

"Take of the flesh of a sound young man dying a natural death about the middle of August, three or four pounds. Let the flesh be taken from his thighs or other fleshy parts. Put it into a fit glass and pour upon it spirit of wine. Let it stand so three or four days. Take out the flesh and put it upon a glass plate, and imbibe it with spirits of salts. Let it stand uncovered, but in the shade, where no dust or other filth may fall upon it. Be sure you often turn it, and being well dried, you may put it up in a fit jar and keep it for use." —*Aurora Chymica*, Chap. III.

A still more efficacious remedy, "producing wonderful effects both in preserving and

restoring health," may be obtained by distilling, filtering, calcining, and coagulating this "Mummiall" till it have a "saccharine taste," when the "matter may be left of the thickness or consistency of honey, which must be kept in glass vessels closely shut." (*Ibid.* p. 8.)

If the "sound young man" should have been killed in the spring instead of in "the middle of August," the learned Dr. Bolnest is not without a remedy. His flesh is indeed no longer useful for a "Mummiall," but his blood may be made into a "very high balsam, exceeding much the powers and virtue of natural balsam; a potent preservative in time of pestilence, leprosie, palsie, and gout of all sorts."

"Take of such blood a large quantity. Gather in glass vessels. Let it settle some time till it hath thrown out all its waterish humour, which separate by wary inclination. Take now of this concrete blood five or six pounds, which put to ten or twelve pints of spirits of wine. Shake them well together, and let it digest six or eight days in warm ashes." Distil. Add the fixed salt drawn out of the *caput mortuum* of the blood by "calcination," "solution," "filtration," "coagulation," often repeated; "and what shall remain behind is the Arcanum of Blood" (p. 10).

When obtained in the manner above de-

scribed, this invaluable remedy is "to be taken in broth, or treacle-water, with a fasting" (and let us devoutly hope an unusually vigorous) "stomach." Only one caution is necessary. The "sound young man's" blood must have been shed "when Mercury was above the horizon and in conjunction with the Sun in Gemini or Virgo."

After the broth of man's blood, a "Balsamick Remedy for Arthritick Pains," composed of the bones of a man "which hath not been buried fully a year," beat up into a powder, calcined and applied on lint, appears a comparatively mild and pleasant receipt. So likewise is the "Quintessence of Toads," to be composed in the month of June or July of a "great quantity of overgrown toads," reduced, calcined, and distilled as usual, and then "dissolved in spirit of oranges, or treacle-water, ready for use," either externally—when it cures "cancers and pestilential venom"—or internally, against "all sorts of poison."

The above prescriptions are taken, be it said, not from the manual of one of those vulgar quacks to whom we are too apt to credit every absurdity of ancient medicine,

but from a serious treatise by Edward Bolnest, Physician in Ordinary to the King (1672), dedicated to George Duke of Buckingham, and described on the title-page as "Shewing a Rational (!) Way of preparing Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals for a Physical Use, by which they are made most efficacious, safe, and pleasant Medicines for the Preservation and Restoration of the Life of Man." How honest was the worthy author in his belief in his Mummiall Quintessence, and all the rest, may be judged from his frank avowal "to the Reader," that the medicines prescribed he might "*in some measure* in time of need trust to," because, adds, Dr. Bolnest candidly, "I never yet from the best of medicines always found those certain effects I could have desired."

These were, however, refined preparations compared to the prescriptions in use in still earlier generations. In the great folio of M. Pietro Andrea Matthioli (Venice, 1621), adorned with hundreds of really admirable woodcuts of medicinal herbs and flowers, there are directions for rubbing wounds with cow-dung, swallowing beeswax, silk, sweat, and

saliva, and drinking hare's blood and dog's dung dissolved in milk as a cure of dysentery. Nervous people are to dine on cooked vipers. Persons with the tooth-ache are to apply to their teeth a serpent's skin steeped in vinegar, or to powder the callosities on a horse's legs, and stuff their ears therewith. A black eye may be treated with a poultice of human milk, incense, and the blood of a tortoise. For the not very serious affection of hiccup a beverage is recommended, of which the chief ingredient is the flesh of a mummy; thus affording us further evidence that Cannibalism survived in medicine, and was approved by the faculty in Italy as well as England, down to a very recent period. Besides these "strange meats," Matthioli regularly classifies in a table a multitude of what he is pleased to call "simple medicines," among which are to be found the bodies, or parts of bodies, of wolves, scorpions, centipedes, ostriches, beavers, and dogs, the cast-off skins of serpents, the horns of unicorns (when attainable!), the hoofs of asses and goats, beeswax, silk, asphalt, and several filthy substances which cannot here be named. Albertus Magnus (*vide* the curious little black

letter volume, "Le Grat Albert," in the British Museum) orders nervous patients to eat eagles' brains, whereby they may acquire the courage of the king of birds; while the brains of the owl, the goat, the camel, &c., convey the peculiar qualities of each of those animals. Pliny's great work, it is needless to say, is a repertory of marvellous counsels and observations. Earth taken out of a human skull acts as a depilatory, and benefit is derived from chewing plants which have happened to grow in the same unpleasant receptacle. On the principle, we presume, of "I am not the rose, but I have dwelt near the rose," herbs growing on a manure heap are found specially efficacious as remedies for quinsy. The hair of man, taken from a cross, is good for quartan fevers, and human ear-wax is the only proper application to a wound occasioned by a human bite. The uses of saliva are numberless, and fill a whole chapter of the "Natural History." "Fasting spittle," in particular, applied to the eyes is an infallible cure for ophthalmia—a remedy which Persius treats with blameworthy scepticism as an old-womanly practice. In cases where bread has stuck in the throat,

a piece of the same loaf should be inserted in the ears. The use of the fluid which exudes from the pores of the skin is so valuable that (Pliny assures us) the owners of the Grecian gymnasia made a thriving trade by selling the scrapings of the bodies of athletes, which, "compounded with oil, is of an emolient, calorific, and expletive nature." If any lady desire to cultivate an interesting and pallid appearance, she ought to imitate Drusus, who drank goats' blood to make it appear that his enemy Cassius had poisoned him. For Melancholy (an affection which seems to have given great concern to the old doctors) Dioscorides recommends black hellebore held in the mouth—certainly a recipe on homœopathic principles, since a mouthful of hellebore would scarcely naturally serve, like the Psalmist's wine and oil, either to make glad the heart of man or to give him a cheerful countenance. A better remedy for the same Melancholy is "broth of old cock"—our Scotch friend Cockaleekie.

For some unexplained reason, two only among the ills to which flesh is heir, and they among the most serious—Frenzy and Inflam-

mation of the stomach—seem to have escaped from the dread *régime* of Sacrificial Medicine, and indeed are treated with surprising lenity. Dioscorides thinks that Frenzy can be cured by asparagus and white wine, and considers that the patient suffering from gastritis should have a plaster of roses applied to the seat of his disease!

Beside the "exhibition" of nauseous and revolting draughts, boluses, and pills, the system of Sacrifical Medicine has, at all times, commanded many other ingenious resources for the creation of unnecessary pain, trouble, and annoyance to sick persons and their friends. If, for example, a stiff-necked patient were unmanageable in the matter of some particularly disagreeable dose, he might still be induced to go on vexing nature by some out-of-the-way diet, and potions repeated at stated intervals, till faith or life succumbed in the struggle. One old physician, Ætius, in this way prescribed for the gout a separate dietary for every month of a whole year. Another, the great Alexander of Tralles, ordained 365 potions, so arranged as to furnish out a course for two years; whereupon Dr.

Freind, the learned author of the "History of Physick," remarks that "his receipts were as good as any of those which our new pretenders to physick make use of;" but adds the discouraging *dictum*, "After all gout is a distemper with which it were best not to tamper!"

Then there were fearful tortures in the way of excoriations, of which St. John Long's famous remedy was a notable example—blisters, cauteries, and setons, too unpleasant to dwell upon. Scarification was a comparatively merciful form of these inflictions. It was practised, according to Prosper Albinus ("Hist. Phys.," p. 17) in the following agreeable manner: "First make a strait (tight) ligature on the leg; then rub the leg below it, put it into warm water, and beat *till it swells*, and so scarify!" Something worse than this was practised down to the present generation in the case of wounds. It is in the writer's recollection that an unhappy groom who had lost a piece of flesh out of the calf of his leg sought assistance after his accident from a motherly old cook, the medical adviser in ordinary of the whole household.

The good woman evidently held the doctrine of Sacrificial Medicine deep in her soul, as well as a due estimate of the utility, under all circumstances, of the art of cookery. Encouraging the poor young man with suitable reflections on the purifying use of salt and fire, she accordingly rubbed a handful from her saltbox into the wound, and then held the miserable limb steadily to the kitchen fire!

A bath of blood has been frequently employed to resuscitate exhausted patients. When Cæsar Borgia barely survived swallowing his share of the bottles of poisoned wine which his respectable father Pope Alexander VI had intended for the cardinal, but took by mistake for himself and his son, it is said that an ox was brought into Cæsar's apartments and disembowelled, to enable him to get into it and receive such vitality as the warm bleeding carcase might impart. We are here at the point where Sacrificial Medicine assumes the vicarious form, and the poor brutes are made to suffer instead of the human patients for the benefit of the latter. In an account of the birth of the Due de Bourgogne,

grandson of Louis XIV, in the "Curiosités Historiques" (p. 48), amid the description of the raptures of the splendid court assembled on the occasion, there is a casual mention of an incident affording a wonderful contrast to all this royal joy and magnificence. The attendant chief *accoucheur*, the celebrated Dr. Clement, to prevent suffering on the part of the mother (the Dauphine), applied to her person the skin of a sheep, newly flayed. To obtain this quite fresh, a butcher was engaged to skin the animal alive, in the adjoining room; and being anxious to offer the skin as quickly as possible to the doctor, he carried it into the chamber of the Dauphine, leaving the door open. The sheep, in its agony, followed him, and ran in, bleeding and skinless, among the shrieking crowd of courtiers and grandees. In modern times, worse things than these are done to animals, professedly for the benefit of mankind; but they are now performed quietly in physiological laboratories, not paraded in public, else it is to be believed that even the most selfish amongst us would cry "Hold! we desire no cure of disease, no scientific knowledge, at any such horrible price."

Yet again, there was a class of Sacrificial Remedies, whose merit consisted in requiring the patient to travel a long way, or to apply to some hardly accessible personage, to obtain relief. There were Holy Wells having no medicinal properties whatever, which cured all the multitudes of people who made long and painful pilgrimages to reach them. More remarkable still were the benefits derived in cases of scrofula from being touched by a king—a privilege, it may be safely guessed, not accorded without some delay and solicitation, and possibly not without fees to royal attendants, scarcely disinterested witnesses of the miracles which followed. The history of this particular delusion would alone form a very curious chapter, since Archbishop Bradwardine, in 1348 appealed to the whole world in proof of the wonder, till Samuel Johnson's scarred and mighty head was subjected to the royal touch. When we recall the fact that only in the eighteenth century did a special religious service for the ceremony cease to form a part of the Liturgy of the Church of England, we do not seem to ourselves to have yet advanced a great way beyond this harmless superstition. Indeed, it is only in

the present generation that the scientific name of the malady has generally superseded its familiar title of the "King's Evil," or by ellipsis "the Evil," by which it is even now known in remote parts of the country.

Where it was impossible to obtain help from a king, there yet remained the possibility of being touched by somebody else, who might possess some rare and peculiar privilege and fitness for healing disease. The odd malady, popularly called "shingles," for example, somehow suggested to the sufferers the desirability of having recourse to some special agency of relief; and this was found in persons who had either themselves eaten the flesh of an eagle, or whose fathers or ancestors had done so. Within the last thirty years a gentleman's servant in Wales has been known to perform a journey of forty miles across the mountains to be touched by a man whose grandfather had eaten an eagle.

Finally, there is a large heterogeneous class of prescriptions, obviously owing their origin to the principle of Sacrificial Medicine, of which the simple rule has been to prevent the miserable patient from adopting any mode of

relief for his sufferings which Nature might point out, and adding to them fresh pain by any ingenious device which may occur to his physician. Of this kind was the treatment of fever in vogue till quite recently, when the patient was carefully shut up in a close room, with well-curtained bed and warm bedclothes, and was prohibited from relieving his thirst with any cold drink. Truly, if Marcellus Sidetes, who is said to have written forty-two books in "heroic" verse "concerning distempers," had given us a picture of all the misery which must have been occasioned in the world by the really *insolent* disregard of Nature and common sense shown in these matters—how many thousands of lives have been thrown away, and through what maddening misery the survivors must have struggled back to life—those poems, instead of being forgotten by the world, might have done us precious service by reminding us that there is some counterweight to be placed in the scale wherein we are wont to measure our debts of gratitude to medical science.

Another appalling device was that of the renowned English physician John of Gaddes-

den, who introduced the practice of treating the small-pox by wrapping up the patient in scarlet, hanging his room with scarlet, and in fact compelling him to rest his feverish eyes only on that flaring hue. John tried this notable device, according to his own showing, on one of the sons of King Edward I (it does not appear to which he refers), and complacently adds to his report, "et est bona cura." In those days, however, doors and windows were not made air-tight, and up the capacious chimneys a considerable portion of fresh air must always have rushed. It was reserved for a later generation to perfect the ingenious system for aggravating and intensifying fever by pasting down the modern window, closing the registers, and (as a climax) engaging nurses to lie beside the sufferer to keep up the heat! The writer heard some years ago from the lips of a Member of Parliament now deceased, the recital of his own treatment as a boy, in or near London, under a severe attack of small-pox. His life being specially valuable as that of an only son, his affectionate parents, by the advice of a distinguished physician, obtained the services

of *two fat women*, who were established permanently in bed on each side of the child during the whole course of the disease! What stipend was offered to tempt these poor obese females to perform this awful service, has escaped from the record.

Reading over all these marvellous prescriptions, it is a refreshing exercise to picture the fashionable "leech," the Gull or Jenner of the period, Physician in Ordinary to the King or Queen, suave and solemn, filled to the brim with all the conscious dignity of Science, standing beside the sick-bed of some mighty prince or peer, and giving to the awe-stricken attendants his high commands to hang the room with scarlet cloth, or to bring to the patient one of the horrid messes prepared with such infinite pains under his direction, in his own laboratory. We can almost hear him condescendingly explaining to the chief persons present what occult relationship exists between the small-pox and the scarlet cloth, or how the Arcanum of Toads comes to be specially valuable, having been composed of the fattest old toads, selected precisely at the right season —*videlicet* midsummer. Of course, in each

sueeessive generation there was nothing for the unlearned laity to do but to bow submissively to the dieta of the exponent of Sciencе as it existed at the time. People may always laugh at what is past and gone; but to suspeet that living men may be mistaken, or that new systems of medicine, philosophy, or theology, may be destined, like the old, to "have their day and eease to be," is audaeity to whieh no one should advanee. We dare not, therefore, suggest that to our grandsons, half our modern nostrums (of whieh the fashion eomes in freshly one season and usually falls into disrepute a few years after) may possibly appear seareely a degree less ridieulous than the Areanum of Toads or the Mummiall Quintessenee. It was not mueh worse, after all, to make a patient drink a dead man's blood than to rob him of his own, in the *Sangrado* style to whieh (in the memory of us all) the world owes the loss of Cavour. It would have been a merey to a poor Florentine lady, lately deeeased, had her physieians eounselled her merely to eat earthworms pieкled in vinegar, or green lizards boiled alive in oil, as reeommended by Dr.

Salmon, instead of bleeding her from the arm nineteen times in the fortnight following her confinement and (as may be readily understood) preceding her untimely death.

Sacrificial Medicine, however, in its simpler and more easily recognizable forms, is undoubtedly on the wane, though a good deal of its spirit may still be traced in our behaviour to the sick. To Homœopathy (as to many another kind of heresy) we probably owe somewhat of the mitigation of orthodoxy; and children, noticing the busts of Hahnemann in the shop windows, may be properly taught to bless that great Deliverer who banished from the nursery those huge and hateful mugs of misery—black founts of so many infantine tears—mugs of sobs and sighs and gasps and struggles unutterable, from one of which Madame Roland drew the first inspiration of that martyr spirit which led her onward to the guillotine, when she suffered herself to be whipped six times running, sooner than swallow the abominable contents.

THE FITNESS OF WOMEN FOR THE MINISTRY OF RELIGION.

THE FITNESS OF WOMEN FOR THE MINISTRY OF RELIGION.

Among the anomalies of our social state may be counted the fact that, while it is generally admitted that women are more religious than men, it is to men that in our age and country the Ministry of Religion is (with infinitesimal exceptions) exclusively committed. While nine persons out of ten are conscious that their earliest sentiments of piety have been derived from a mother, and that a sister or a wife has alone enabled the troubled faith of their latter years to survive the shocks of worldliness and doubt, there is yet not one recognized channel by which these waters of life, stored in the fountain of women's hearts, can flow beyond the narrowest borders; while, on the contrary, it is not too much to surmise that to a very large number of clergymen, well-meaning, learned and conscientious, the sense of dryness of soul in all

that concerns the more spiritual part of their office is a perpetual self-reproach. *Habitans in Sicco* writes every autumn in the newspapers to complain he can obtain no refreshment from his weekly sermon at any church in his neighbourhood, while around him all the time are private wells and underground rivers of the purest element of feeling for which he thirsts. It is a case of

> "Water, water, everwhere,
> But not a drop to drink."

What we want first and above all things in our ministers of religion is, *that they should be intensely religious;* and knowing this, and that all other gifts and acquirements are comparatively of small avail for the purpose, we deliberately exclude from the sacred office that moiety of the community amongst whom this special and most precious grace is, at all events, least rare.*

The reasons for this exclusion are, however,

* It will be seen that I differ *toto cœlo* on this point from Mr. Mahaffy in his interesting recent essay on the "Decay of Preaching." He seems to me only to recognize the *moral and intellectual* forces which move men, and these compared to the spiritual are only what mechanical ones are to the electric.

amply sufficient to account, historically, for the anomaly. They are of two kinds, which I shall take leave to characterize as the Bad and the Good. There is a very deep-rooted prejudice, inherited from the ascetics of early Christianity, whereby the idea of womanhood is connected with very base associations. It is impossible to ignore this fact in any review of the religious position of the sex ; and it is therefore better to say bluntly that, from this point of view, a woman is looked upon rather as an emissary from the Pit than a "daughter of the Lord Almighty ;" rather a temptation to earthly passion than a helpmate to heavenly purity. Springing up when the old classical world had sunk into a corruption and foulness which we can now probably little realize in imagination, the frenzy of asceticism which was nourished among the deserts of the Thebaid, and attained its full growth in the monasteries of Greece and Italy—the origin of all the legends of which the "Temptation of St. Anthony" is the type*—has left almost ineffaceable traces throughout the nations of

* Ingoldsby's rendering of this world-famous story, the favourite theme of so many eminent painters, is

Europe ; of course much more sharply marked in the Latin and Greek Churches, which have canonized these poor fanatics, and still set apotheosized Virginity on one of the thrones of Heaven, than among Protestant communities, wherein marriage has been always placed on a moral level with celibacy, and Martin Luther has been thoroughly absolved for his conjugal affection for the singularly plain old lady whose portrait by Lucas Cranach we beheld some years ago in the Exhibition of Old Masters in Burlington House.* Never-

probably no very exaggerated reading of the general impression of the monastic mind respecting the fair sex :

" There are many devils which walk this world,
Devils great and devils small,
Devils short and devils tall ;
Bold devils which go with their tails unfurled,
Sly devils which carry them quite upcurled ;
* * * * *
But a laughing woman with two bright eyes
Is the worsest devil of all ! "

* I know not on what authority the familiar jovial couplet has been attributed to the great Reformer :

Wer liebt nicht Wein, Weib nnd Gesang
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang.

The ascetic spirit had very far departed, at all events, from the author who composed it.

theless, even among Protestant Christians, a certain impression has remained, the reverse of the faith of their old Teuton forefathers, that women were nearer to the mind of the Divinity than men. The highest religious *status* a woman could attain in Milton's opinion was a sort of deputy-piety;

> "He for God only, she for God in him;"

a type which, considering the kind of representatives of the Deity which some of Adam's descendants have proved to their wives, is scarcely to be ranked as elevated. The paramount influence of St. Paul's mind in generating (as Rowland Williams expresses it) the religious atmosphere which Protestants breathe, and the great celibate Apostle's semi-ascetic feelings about women, has seemingly counteracted the hereditary predisposition of Saxondom to reverence them. His treatment of Marriage (reproduced in the exordium of the Solemnization of Holy Matrimony in the English Book of Common Prayer, and apparently intended to show how *un*holy are the sentiments assumed to form the usual basis of that alliance) has certainly tended to

preserve the prestige of scriptural dignity and authority for sentiments on such subjects derived from Southern races and coarser times, and which might else have died out ere now in Teutonized Europe. That, considering the hysterical behaviour of his male converts, when "every one hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation,"* prudence justified St. Paul in prohibiting female locutions in public worship, may be fully conceded. But the unhappy petrifaction of his current directions, whereby (like so many other biblical utterances) they have become laws for all time and every divergency of circumstance, has been attended with lamentable consequences. No Jewish lawgiver ever bade the Miriams and Deborahs, the Esthers and Judiths, of his race "keep silence" and hide their diminished heads from regard to "the angels," or to anybody else in or out of temple or camp; and the consequence has been (as a very remarkable paper by a Jewish lady has

* 1 Cor. xiv. 26. If this graphic description had applied to a *female* assembly, should we have ever been allowed to forget the circumstance?

pointed out),* that female patriots, judges and prophetesses, have played a noble and conspicuous part through the whole history of Judaism. But (not to speak profanely) St. Paul has been supposed to act like Louis XIV, when he forbade that any more healing wonders should be done at the tomb of the Abbé Paris :

> De par le Roi—Défense a Dieu,
> De faire miracle en ce lieu.

If it were to please Providence to inspire a woman with any of the gifts of the prophetic or ministerial offices, if ever the promise should be fulfilled to the letter that "your sons and *your daughters* shall prophesy," and that the impulse to speak holy words were to seize her in the most natural and appropriate place, to wit, in church, St. Paul is quoted as authority to check any such irregular and unsuitable proceeding: "I suffer not a woman to speak in church." The result has been that, except among the Quakers (who have coolly set the prohibition aside, and seemingly profited not a little by so doing), Christian rivals to the

* "The Hebrew Woman," by Constance de Rothschild (Mrs. Cyril Flower).

heroines of Judaism are not producible. During these last eighteen centuries, among all the millions of women in whose hearts the precepts of Christ have been sown and borne rich fruit, there may well have been a few whose eloquence and fervour of piety would have influenced the heart of men as much as a St. Bernard or a Peter the Hermit, and whose words, like those of a Tauler, a Fénélon or an à Kempis, would have remained a spiritual treasure for all time. But if such have lived and felt and thought, and longed perhaps to speak to their fellow-men out of the abundance of their hearts, their mouths have been effectually stopped. Order has reigned in the churches so far as they were concerned, and whatever light they might perchance have borne into the dark places of the earth, instead of being set on a candlestick, has been very carefully covered up under a bushel.

Such are, I venture to think, the bad reasons for the exclusion of women from the ministry. Good ones, however, are certainly forthcoming, if perchance, when weighed in the scale against the arguments in favour of such an innovation,

they prove less heavy. They are drawn from circumstances, some of which pertain to the order of nature and can never be altered, while others might be, or are already, in process of change.

The functions of a minister of religion, as understood in modern times (apart from priestly claims to administer sacraments by special divine commission, with which we need not concern ourselves here), are, roughly speaking, two-fold: 1st, public prayer and preaching; and, 2nd, pastoral ministrations in the homes of the members of the congregation. Regarding the first, women labour under several disadvantages, sometimes amounting to disabilities. Though women's voices, *when good*, reach farther than those of men, a considerable number are deficient in the physical vocal power indispensable to make themselves heard in an assembly numbering above one or two hundred persons. Nothing would be more pitiable and ridiculous than for one of these ladies, whatever might be her mental gifts, to mount a pulpit and, with feeble voice rising only to crack in an occasional screech, to attempt to pour forth

exhortations which three-fourths of her audience could not hear, and under which the remainder would writhe in an auditorial purgatory. Secondly, there can be no question but that the average female intellect is below the average male intellect, and consequently that there are fewer women than men up to the mark of intellectual competence, below which preaching, however well intended, and even inspired by genuine and true feeling, is apt rather to "give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme," than to tend to edifying. If the foolish things of the world often confound the wise, the foolish people in it provoke and distract them; and even to their humblest hearers many such well-meaning silly ones would be little else than the blind leading the blind into a ditch. Lamentable as it would be to hear a shrill feminine squeak delivering from the desk the majestic periods of Job and Isaiah, it would be doubly deplorable to listen to a thin and only too distinctly audible soprano enouncing alternately from the pulpit platitudes, ineptitudes and blunders, such as memory recalls only too keenly to many of us among the severest trials of the domestic

circle. A special peril in this matter also lies in the ill-omened circumstance that the greater the folly of the woman, so much greater, alas! is generally to be found her propensity to preach in private, and therefore, it may presumably be dreaded, her proclivity to extend to a larger sphere the benefit of her exhortations. It has been the observation of the present writer through a long experience, that masculine and feminine folly usually differ in this essential particular. The Man-fool dimly perceives he is a fool, and holds his tongue accordingly; or (if the vanity of his sex prevent him from arriving consciously at any such conviction or conclusion), he deems that as Prudence is the better part of Valour, so is Silence the proper garb of Wisdom, and that the less he wastes on an ungrateful world the precious jewels of his ideas, the more credit shall he have for those supposed to remain in the casket of his mind. A man who talks much is nine times out of ten a clever and brilliant person, and may possibly be the most profound of thinkers, who brings out of the inexhaustible treasury of his imagination things new and old. A Woman-fool, on the contrary, usually does

not find out, till she is old and ugly and the habit of silly chatter is irretrievably settled, that she is a fool at all; probably for the simple reason, that the more folly she talks, the more delighted her male admirers generally show themselves with her discourse. Even if she does not happen to think herself particularly clever or well-informed, she has been taught to believe that ability in a woman is rather a defect to be concealed, than a gift to be exhibited, and that, as the sagacious Chinese proverb has it, "The glory of a man is knowledge, but the glory of a woman is to renounce knowledge." Accordingly, without the slightest reticence or dread of exposure, she tumbles out of her untidy brain notions as trivial and *mesquin* as the contents of her own disorderly work-basket—here a button and there a spangle, a thimble, a bit of crochet, a string of beads, a tangled skein of silk, and a little ribbon marked with inches wherewith to measure the universe. The result of this difference in the display of folly is naturally to lend colour to a somewhat exaggerated estimate of that surplusage of feebleness and frivolity in the feminine scale, of the exist-

ence of which, alas! there can be no doubt, but which is perhaps less than is supposed out of proportion with the correlative dulness and stupidity in the masculine balance. As the immortal Mrs. Poyser sums up the matter, "Women *are* fools. Providence made them to match the men."

Thus, then, two arguments at least against admitting women to the ministry rest on natural and inevitable grounds: some women are physically, some other women mentally, incapable of adequately fulfilling its duties. And to these adverse reasons others are added by the actual, though not inevitable, conditions of society. Women up to the present time have been almost indefinitely less well educated than men, and only their superior quickness and tact prevented this inequality from telling disastrously in common life; while nothing could hinder it from doing so, were they to undertake the office of public teachers. By hook or crook, with little teaching (and that teaching generally fourth or fifth rate of its kind), women have managed pretty generally to scrape together and store up in their memories in a happy-go-lucky way a certain

quantity of knowledge, useful and ornamental, enough to pass muster. Women's culture, when women are cultivated, sometimes (perhaps we may say often) possesses rather more breadth than that of men, and includes a good many topics rarely included in the masculine curriculum. It is therefore well suited to furnish pleasure to the possessor and entertainment to her acquaintance and readers; but the accuracy and definiteness of knowledge which men obtain, thanks to their much abused classical and mathematical training, is what every ordinarily educated woman with a grain of sense sighed for, till the day when the great movement for the Higher Eucation of Women reared a more fortunate generation. Now it is clearly highly desirable, if not absolutely indispensable, that a person who may be called upon to treat publicly and didactically, if not controversially (and let us hope and pray that women will not generally take to controversy!), almost every subject in the range of the higher interests of man, who at least ought not to regard any such interest as foreign ground, should possess not merely wide but accurate information, and be as far as possible above

the liability to commit any gross blunders. This is of course viewing the subject apart from any special theological training such as the older churches have deemed almost the first qualification for the ministerial office. Even the poor Capuccini preaching friars, whose astounding ignorance of profane history and science affords inexhaustible tales of merriment in Italy, who talk of "the great St. Augustine of Hippo, who crowned King Alfred, who signed Magna Charta," and are wont to indulge in such figures of rhetoric as imaginary sniffs round the pulpit at the smell of the roasting flesh of St. Lawrence on his gridiron—even these poor old fellows have received adequate instruction in the doctrines, the legends, and the moral and penitential systems of their Church. Proverbially ignorant as are the Greek Popes, and the Nestorian, Coptic, and Maronite priests, they too are perfectly well "up" in all those recondite dogmas which are supposed to be their peculiar concern, and can tell with unerring certainty whether the Second Divine Person had two natures or two wills, or only one of each, or whether the Third positively proceeded from

the First only, according to Greek orthodoxy, or from the First and Second, according to that of Rome and Canterbury. Nearer home, of course, theological education is a wider and more serious matter. If young priests at Maynooth are taught the astronomical system which makes the sun go round the earth, and the moral system of Peter Dens, which is nearly as completely the reverse of truth, they still receive an enormous amount of something which goes by the name of instruction, and, in the matters of scholastic theology and casuistry, are probably qualified to beat a great many eminent D.D.'s of Oxford and Cambridge. Here in England, and in Scotland also, every church, Established and Dissenting, has its college or colleges for training its clergy, either apart from, or together with, students intended for lay professions; and without the degree or certificate afforded by such institution, the entry into the ministry is barred. Christendom, in short, has, like Judaism, its "Schools of the Prophets," and nobody is invited to prophesy, even if he be pious and gifted as John Bunyan, who has not passed through them and learned his lesson.

The necessity for this theological training, so far as it concerns the insurance of orthodox doctrine from the acolyte when he becomes a preacher, of course falls to the ground when we contemplate an order of things quite outside the orthodox churches, and such as it is not to be anticipated they will sanction for many a day. Our female preacher is by the hypothesis, for the present at all events, either quite irregularly connected with the orthodox sects, a Minister Unattached or Amateur Pastor (and some such there are at this moment doing a vast deal of good work, *e.g.*, Miss Catherine Marsh and the sister of Mr. Spurgeon); or if ever officially recognized and a professional minister, then as belonging to some heterodox communion, such as the Salvation Army, or those in America, which profit by the services of the Rev. Phœbe Hanaford, the Rev. Antoinette Brown, and the late Rev. Celia Burleigh; and the Unitarian congregation at Melbourne, which honoured itself by choosing for their pastor Martha Turner, a lady whose great abilities and noble spiritual feeling seem to me to hold out the very example we seek of what

a woman in the pulpit may and ought to be.* No necessity exists compelling a female preacher who enlists under the banner of religious freedom to undergo the particular mental drill which qualifies the Romanist or Anglo-Catholic clergyman for the performance of all the peculiar intellectual labours and combats necessary to his office, and included in the duty of honestly believing exactly all which his Church believes; and being equipped to do battle with anybody who believes anything less or anything more. But is there on this account less reason that the candidate for another kind of ministry should undertake less severe studies and go through a less complete mental training than the embryo priest, Latin or Anglican? The reverse has been most wisely maintained by the Unitarian body in this country, whose scheme of theological culture (if the present writer may presume to estimate it) is wider and deeper than that which is demanded to qualify the possessor for the See of Canterbury. The

* A sermon by this lady on "The Sacrament of Life," preached and printed at Melbourne, would amply justify, I think, to every reader the remark above.

teacher of religion who is to be something more than the expounder of a ready-prepared catechism,—who is to lead his flock not merely into one particular paddock and to water them exclusively at one particular pond, but into every field of sweet and wholesome herbage, and beside every stream of living waters,—whose duty it will be to pluck up the cruel brambles and clear away the piles of stones of doubts and difficulties which grow and are flung by careless hands along the path of faith and life,—such a teacher ought to be furnished with every aid which learning can offer. Above all, I should hold that a woman who should venture to assume this high and arduous task specially needs such equipment, since, for a long time to come, she must expect to be more than others the mark of question and criticism; and the very eagerness of her own mind may (unless weighted by solid erudition) carry her more quickly and more remotely astray. Every one must have noticed how there are some persons full of originality and mother-wit, who continually fancy they are making fresh observations and theories, while their next neighbour, who has

never had an idea properly his own, can tell them off on his fingers, what ancient sage first made their observation, and when and by whom in the Middle Ages their theory was broached, and how it was refuted and abandoned by all thinking people several centuries ago. The merely original man makes himself ridiculous for want of learning, and is in fact always beginning *de novo* at the bottom of the ladder of human thought. The mere scholar is nothing better than a Conversations-Lexicon, and never exercises any influence except that of a useful drag on the ideas of his friends when they are going down-hill. The true teacher must indispensably combine both the gift of originality and the acquirement of such stores of knowledge as shall enable him to trace doctrines and hypotheses to their sources —to know what has been said for and against them by the greater thinkers of the world who have dealt with them—and, in a word, to know exactly how far he is, or is not, a heretic, and not be (as is the commonest of cases) a heinous heretic while he believes himself strictly orthodox, and strictly orthodox and even commonplace when he enunciates what he fondly

conceives to be a bold and startling heresy. All this applies (for reasons too obvious to need animadversion) pre-eminently to teachers of the more impulsive sex. Accordingly we must admit that the argument against female ministers of religion founded on the lower educational status of women at present, is, so far as it goes, perfectly valid.

Lastly, there is an argument which I imagine would half-consciously influence many serious-minded people against the admission of women to such an office. Women are (thanks to all sorts of causes, historical, political, personal, with which we need not concern ourselves) actually much *deconsidered* by men. Would not their deconsideration be reflected on Religion itself were they to become its authorized ministers? With enormous labour the Broad Church school has been trying to efface the stamp of effeminacy from their order, to cultivate "Muscular Christianity," and make laymen of the order of the author of "Sword and Gown" remember that a priest is not necessarily an old woman. If many women, old or young, enter the ministry, will not this effort to redeem the character of the

order be entirely thrown away, and the impression become quite ineffaceable that Manliness and Godliness are two orbs always seen in opposition and never in conjunction? I confess I should feel such a fear as this to form a very cogent argument were it altogether well founded.

Let us now, before attempting to discuss the possible advantages to be set against all these objections to the religious ministry of women, briefly run back over the heads we have passed, and see if there be not some answer to each objection, or at least some hope that its force might with time and care be neutralized.

First, there was noticed the ascetic feeling, inherited from the old monks, of the essential *unholiness* of women, and their consequent unworthiness to meddle with sacred things. This idea has probably occurred for the first time to many an English lady when she has penetrated by chance into some hallowed precinct, some tempting and shadowy cloister, of a monastery in Italy or Syria, and has been driven out tumultuously by a whole flock of cowled and sandalled brethren, cackling like

so many geese at the intrusion of a cat into a hen-house. Perhaps, as at Vallombrosa among the Apennines, or St. Saba in the desert, she has seen the gentlemen of her party courteously received and comfortably lodged within the noble walls of the convent, while she has been left to such nocturnal repose as might be found in a flea-haunted pavilion outside, or in her tent pitched in a valley of centipedes. She has been accustomed to think of women generally as of the types common in decent English society, a little straitlaced, or perhaps a little "gushing," as the case may be; and she has very honestly taken it for granted that if there be any serious harm in the world, it is the opposite sex who are principally to blame. Suddenly it is revealed to her that, by a large number of her fellow-creatures, she herself and all her female belongings,—her eminently respectable governesses, the Misses Prunes and Prism—her dear old grandmother, Mrs. Goody-Good—and her majestic aunt, Lady Bountiful,—all are looked upon as little better than so many Succubi of Satan, sent to lure the souls of those ridiculous old monks to destruction. The shock has not rarely

produced a peal of ungovernable laughter such as those hoary cloisters had never echoed ere profane Saxon Balmorals trod their pavement; but when *la pazza Signorina Inglese* has retired to her hotel or her tent, she finds that a new and very unpleasant light has been thrown on matters whereon she had never reflected before. Modern English Ritualism and Monasticism are doing their best, in more ways than need now be specified, to introduce into English life these Oriental and gross ideas about women; that pseudo-purity which is most impure. In so far as they prevail, they will do us an injury quite incalculable. Needless to say that, to people trained in such a school, a female minister of religion would be a monstrous thing. *Almost* as well might the creature trill out the melodies of *La Traviata* or *La Grande Duchesse*, or perform her part in a ballet in the costume of a sylph! The view of womanhood taken by these ultra-sanctified persons and by the most cynical and profligate old *roués* is practically the same. Surely it is to be hoped that all this worse than folly will be swept away in the blast of public impatience and indignation which

sooner or later must burst, like a breath of wholesome autumn storm, through the incense-laden atmosphere of Ritualism, and consign to the four winds all its trumpery of millinery, chandlery and upholstery, and the thoroughly base and materialistic ideas which have come in along with them!

Secondly, among the bad reasons for the exclusion of women from the pulpit, we have referred to St. Paul's *dictum*, "I suffer not a woman to speak in church." Whatever high degree of human wisdom we must all attribute to the greatest of the apostles, or even divine authority, as the orthodox hypothesis of inspiration would give to his words, there is absolutely no ground at all for the assumption that, *because* he forbade women to affront public opprobrium by preaching when women lived habitually shut up, each in her *gynœccum*, he would likewise have forbidden them to offer religious exhortations in a sacred place when public sentiment has become reconciled to their appearance in the streets, on the stage, in the lecture-room, and even on the platform. The coolness, indeed, wherewith the most

orthodox persons always *do* practically take for granted that scriptural precepts, however rigid in form and seemingly intended by their authors for perpetual observance, are to be set aside without scruple, as applying to a bygone state of things, when they do *not* chime in with their own inclinations and prejudices, is only to be paralleled by the tenacity wherewith they maintain their authority under every vicissitude when they happen to coincide with them. Let any one who quotes St. Paul's incidental remark about women speaking in church, be called on to avow how far he has taken to heart the solemn decree issued in the Encyclical Letter of the one great Council of the assembled apostles, in the awfully mysterious words, "It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost *and to us*" (as if these were two separate opinions) "to lay upon you (the Gentile world) no greater burden than these necessary things — to abstain from meats offered to idols, and from things strangled, and from blood." Lives there a modern Christian whose conscience would in the smallest degree be troubled by taking the

rice and ghee from a Hindoo temple, eating a rabbit strangled in a snare, or partaking of a black-pudding or a Bologna sausage?

Passing now to the more reasonable reasons against admitting women to the ministry,—the natural and incurable disabilities, physical and mental, under which not a few of them labour,—the answer comes at once to hand. Those amongst them who are unfitted for the office must not undertake it, any more than dumb or stuttering or imbecile men. There is no more difficulty in exclusion in one case than in the other, though there may be a few more persons necessarily excluded.

As to education, the case is much more serious. Certainly, unless women can receive the same solid and extensive training as male theological students (rather more strict and rigid than less so), to make up for what may have been wanting of exactness in their girlish school-room education, the appearance in our pulpits of a number of female heads, lightly stored with learning or logic, would be to the last degree ill-omened. But is there the smallest necessity why this should be? If the desire of a woman to devote herself to religious

work were of any depth or worth consideration, she would not only be willing, but *crave*, to pass through the severest studies, to fit herself to the utmost of her abilities for so high and sacred a task; and it is no longer an hypothesis but a demonstrated fact that if women choose to study and have the fair opportunity of doing so, there are not a few of them capable at all events of attaining to those levels whereon men of the learned professions habitually take their stand. If a few fickle or weak-minded women were to enter as students such an institution, let us say, as Manchester New College, they would be very speedily "choked off," and no more harm would be done than by the scores of youths "plucked" at Oxford and Cambridge, and led to change their programme of life. Those women, on the contrary, who should pass successfully through such an intellectual and moral sieve might thenceforth be very safely trusted.

Again: The fear that Religion itself might come to be deconsidered, as a result of the deconsideration of the sex of its ministers, must prove groundless if, instead of bringing

a fresh element of weakness into preaching and prayer, it should prove that (as I shall hope presently to show) women are likely to pour a new stream of life into what has so often become dry and unprofitable. After all, the inner heart of humanity honours in its very core spiritual graces, over the physical, the intellectual, and even the moral. Not the conquerors, not the philosophers, not even those who have displayed most *virtue* apart from religion, have been adored and deified amongst men, but the prophets and saints who have ascended the mountain-peaks of Prayer and thrown open the windows of Heaven.

Now as we look back over the Christian centuries during which the spiritual, God-loving, anti-carnal impulse sent forth from Judæa has passed on, transmitted in waves of emotion from age to age and land to land, does it not seem probable that among those who have received it most fully, and might have helped its transmission most effectually, there have been thousands of women? In effect, history notoriously shows that in the apostolic time and at the period of the con-

version of Europe, at least half the work achieved was due to the ardour wherewith noble ladies not a few took up the task of introducing and disseminating Christian ideas through courts and camps. But when the age for this kind of female patronage was over, the powers of women to aid the cause which so many of them have had next to their innermost hearts, have been narrowed within the walls of the home or even of the cloister. I do not doubt that this home influence of women has indeed been incalculably great and beneficent. It is hard to conceive what would be the sort of religion remaining in an island colonized by men only, and with a population recruited only by boys too young to remember a mother's care. The chances might lie between a society of Trappists, or a herd such as the gold-diggers of a "Roaring Camp" in a Californian gulch. But because the religious influence of women in their homes has been inestimably beneficial, is it, I ask, any reason for resting satisfied that they should exercise no such influence outside their doors? Surely there might have been prevision of just such a state of things as has

existed now for more than a thousand years in Christendom, in the warning of the great Founder of Christianity that a light (when we are so happy as to possess a light) should be set on a candlestick and not under a bushel? If ever the time comes when the spiritual home influence of women is allowed to radiate into the outer circle of public life, there is every reason to believe that the inestimable element of spirituality will make itself felt, touching the hearts of men with new softness, awakening their consciences with the power of mother-like gentleness, and inspiring quite a new reverence, alike for women and for religion.

"Ah!" it will be said, "this is all very well if women should, by some happy chance, succeed well as preachers and ministers. If, on the contrary, they fail, and make a miserable *fiasco* of their attempt, what ridicule will they not draw on the most sacred things! Is it wise, is it allowable, to incur such a risk?"

Feeling a good deal of sympathy with such an alarm as this, having a terror (possibly exaggerated) of some day undergoing the frightful experience of listening, in a place of worship from which I could not decently

escape, to the ignorant, shallow, dogmatic folly which it has been my occasional penance to hear from women elsewhere, and which has undoubtedly a character of its own still more ignorant, more shallow and more dogmatic, than any folly commonly to be heard from men, I here humbly confess that for many years such a possibility has with me almost outweighed the actual probability that women would in general fulfil the duties of the ministry exceptionally well. But longer reflection has tended much to remove my fears, while it has strengthened my hopes. In the first place, I look with extreme confidence to such a sifting process as a good theological college course would inevitably effect, to exclude from concurrence all the frivolous, the half-hearted, the weak-minded —all those women, in short, who should not prove capable of strong and steady mental labour, and willing to undergo it for several consecutive years. From such as should pass triumphantly through an ordeal of this kind, nothing very outrageous in the way of folly or contemptible in the way of feminine "twaddle" would need to be apprehended.

And, again, there is a second and very satisfactory ground for reassurance. Female ministers will certainly not (at all events for a very long time to come) be appointed to lecture us by any despotic authority. They cannot, indeed, be ministers at all unless some of us distinctly desire them to minister for our particular benefit. By a happy decree of Fate, it takes at least two or three persons at any time to form a congregation. There must be the hearers of the discourse as well as the speaker; and, as even the sternest sticklers for the rights of women are not likely to proceed so far as to demand compulsory attendance at female preachments, there will always remain open a door of hope and refuge whereby the oppressed may go free. The same argument applies in this case as to the everlastingly-reproduced fallacy about the franchise, namely, that if their political disabilities be removed, women will invade the benches of St. Stephen's. As nobody can ever be elected an M.P. unless he, or she, find a majority of some constituency to choose him, or her, as the best candidate, so neither can anybody become a minister in one of the free

churches, unless he, or she, find a congregation ready to "sit under" him, or her, as a tolerable preacher. In either case, the woman who could so singularly impress the majority of electors* or of parishioners with the conviction of her supreme fitness as to induce them to choose her for the political or religious office, would be undoubtedly so very remarkable a person, that it would be ten thousand pities the world should be deprived of her services.

Let us now turn to the other side of the shield. Having discussed the validity of the arguments against the admission of women to the ministry, let us see what is to be said directly in favour of such an innovation.

In the first place, it is obvious that women have certain special aptitudes and qualifications (as well as the above-named inaptitudes) for such an office. We have been hitherto speaking as if the work of a minister lay almost

* In the case of the M.P., this would need to be a majority of *men*, seeing that the whole female contingent of qualified voters will only (if admitted) add about a fifth or sixth to the register.

exclusively in the pulpit and reading-desk; but we must remember that a very large and very important part of it lies also in the homes of the members of the congregation, in the hour of their sorrows and difficulties, their sicknesses, doubts, repentances, death. Can any one doubt that the tender and ready sympathies of women, and their superior tact and discernment of character, their natural tendency to soothe and exhort rather than to upbraid or threaten, are qualities more valuable for such service than any which men, however pious, well-meaning and learned in casuistry, usually bring to such tasks? As a matter of fact, women do instinctively perform the office of ministering angels on these occasions all over the land, without waiting for any licence or consecration; while many of the best of the clergy either suffer all their days from unconquerable shyness and the sense of their own want of tact, or run speedily into the ruts of professional consolations and exhortations in formal phraseology, meaning little or nothing to speaker or hearer. Of all the irritating—I might say, maddening—things in human life, there is nothing worse

than to be addressed in the hour of mortal agony and despair, when our hearts, riven to the core, could scarcely bear an angel's touch, by a smug, self-satisfied personage, who inflicts on us his cut-and-dried consolations and exhortations to perfect quiescence and cheerful resignation; all the time revealing, by every word and gesture, how utterly incapable he is of comprehending even the shadow of our grief. It would be difficult to estimate how many people (especially the intelligent men of the humbler classes, who are the principal victims of these tormenters), —men who would have suffered themselves to be led with child-like submission by any wise and loving hand, even through the wicket-gate of Prayer and Repentance, to the Heavenly Way,—have been, on the contrary, goaded by tactless parsons into hardness and rebellion. It is real, genuine, spontaneous *sympathy* which alone can authorize any one to approach the sacred borders of a great sorrow. Can any one doubt that women would, as a general rule, feel this more tenderly, more genuinely, than men? The fear would be that the strain on the heart of a good woman, minister of a

large congregation, would be so great as very sensibly to tell upon health and life.

Further, outside the region of sentiment, and even in the intellectual way, so far as it concerns social influence, a woman has special facilities. If she have extensive knowledge (and I am presuming she will have acquired a good deal before entering the ministry), it will generally be more *ready to hand* than that of a man. Her humour, if she possesses a grain of that precious quality, will have the great advantage, in all wordy skirmishing, of being playful, quick as lightning, and always at command,—not like the ponderous satire which takes an hour to get out of its sheath, or the peculiarly masculine type of wit which the owner—

> "beareth not about,
> As if afraid to use it out,
> Except on holidays or so,
> As men their best apparel do.'

Her logic—if by happy circumstance she has really trained her mind to work logically—will not lose the famous feminine faculty for springing to the top of the stairs while the man is steadily walking up the steps, because she

has acquired the power of recognizing whether she be on the right landing or the wrong.

Regarding the rhetorical faculties of women, I may first remark that, by a well-known law of acoustics, a female voice will, if equally strong, reach further, and be audible more clearly at a distance, than that of a man; and, for some kinds of eloquence at all events, its softer and purer tones will probably find their way most easily to the heart. What her actual powers of oratory may be, is one of the problems of the future; but the experience of feminine public speaking during the last few years, seems to point to a curious but not inexplicable fact, viz., that, given the same *ideas*, a woman will generally *express* them more easily than a man, at least than an Englishman. This gift of facile and appropriate expression is obviously one dependent on a special faculty of the brain (the loss of which constitutes *aphasia*), and is very variously distributed among races, and also, I think, between the sexes. Oratory, which is dependent upon it for its machinery, as a pianist on his fingering, is proverbially rare among men of our nation, though when it does

exist, it seems to reach sometimes to the climax of power and grandeur. English-*women*, on the contrary (so far as we yet may guess), possess more often the ready-wordedness, the fluency and *verve* of speech, of the Celt or the Italian. Either the feminine nervous temperament is favourable to this faculty, or (as I would rather imagine to be the case) the root of the difference lies in the region of sentiment, and women speak more fluently because they are more apt to be carried away by interest in their subject or sympathy with their audience. The dread of making himself ridiculous by stammering, by talking injudiciously, or making a mistake of any kind, is so deeply ingrained in the mind of the ordinary English gentleman, that if one —not a barrister or clergyman, and consequently not inured to the sound of his own voice—be called on suddenly to return thanks at a wedding-breakfast, he will, nine times out of ten, stutter and hum-and-haw, and, after putting every one on thorns, will end by making some extraordinarily *mal-à-propos* joke, like the celebrated one of Lord Feenix in "Dombey & Son." Or if he be aware

over-night that he will be called on to address his own tenants on the morrow, his slumbers will be considerably less sound than if he had been warned he must go out and fight a duel at sixteen paces. As to an Englishman taking kindly to public speaking when advanced in life, so miraculous an event, I believe, is scarcely on record.

Nearly the contrary of all this holds true as regards women. Those among them who are willing to speak in public seem to be carried away the moment they begin by feelings which leave little room for self-reflection, whatever pangs of shyness and diffidence they may have endured beforehand.* But is

* This at least is the impression left on me by the female speakers (some twenty perhaps) whom I have chanced to hear. I never knew one of them "hum or "haw," or stammer, or break down, even when (as in one very remarkable case) the gentle and learned speaker had never addressed an audience till the occasion, when she had already passed middle life. Among the most remarkable phenomena of the present day I reckon the preaching of Mrs. Booth, the wife of the General of the Salvation Army. The combination of fervent zeal with practical good sense in her extempore discourses, must be admired even by those who differ most widely from her views.

it not very superfluous to expatiate on the special gifts of speech assigned by Nature to womankind, since in all ages their proneness to over-exert them has been the theme of jest and satire, and at no very remote date hostelries were adorned by the sign of the "Good Woman," meaning a woman with no tongue; penal laws were in force against the creature (now happily classified among the Extinct Mammalia), the Common Scold; and even tombstones were enlivened by a sort of dig at the sleeper beneath, as in the case of the celebrated Arabella Young, whose death is specified as the date when she "began to hold her tongue"? Perhaps it is not unjust to entertain the suspicion that masculine wit may sometimes have proved rather tardy in parrying the thrusts of that "little member," which we all know is sharpened in so terrible a furnace, and that the ponderous sarcasms recorded against its misuse may be likened to the boulder-stones thrown by Polyphemus after the retreating and exultant Greeks.

Joke or no joke, it is quite certain that women are even exceptionally endowed with several, if not all, of the qualities necessary to

oratory. The originality and depth of their ideas and the culture they have received may in many cases be open questions, but there can be no doubt at all that, when they have got the ideas, they will find out remarkably well how to express them.

It is time now to pass to the graver part of our subject—the value which may attach to women's thoughts about Religion; for if that value be trifling, it will be all the more unfortunate should they possess any facilities for inposing them upon us by wordy fluency; that "fatal fluency" which the best men in America have deplored as among the gifts of their countrymen.

Thoughts of the class which are properly expressed in pulpits are, of course, of various kinds. There are thoughts which are purely reflections and speculations of the intellect on critical and philosophical problems, and which an able lawyer, an acute critic, or a profound metaphysician, can make as well, or better, than a prophet or a saint; nay, in which a Mephistopheles might excel a Tauler. It is no doubt sometimes necessary (though surely by no means so frequently as some preachers

seem to take for granted) to offer thoughts of this class to a congregation, and, in short, to read out in church an article which, *minus* the text, might have appeared in a Review. If it be a very lofty and religious mind from which such thoughts emanate, they will of course possess an elevating power proportioned to the momentum of such a mind brought to bear on ordinary intellects. To be lifted by sermons of this class into the serene and purified atmosphere of noble speculation, will of itself effect a quasi-religious result, independently of any conviction of theological truths which may or may not be brought away. The hearers who have followed for half-an-hour the upward flight of one of these eagle souls will return to the petty concerns, interests, pleasures, anxieties of common life, calmed and ennobled, and able to see all things in more just proportions. On the other hand, if the preacher be merely a clever critic or metaphysician, who deals with sacred themes as a counsel with the case in his brief, the result of his sermons, however brilliant and interesting they may be found by an intellectual audience, and triumphantly satis-

factory to those who find their cherished opinions clinched by his arguments, will be the reverse of religious. The listeners will go away, not awed and calmed, but eager for controversy and confirmed in self-confidence; having lost any benefit which they might have derived from the previous acts of worship. They have been made to rise from their knees to sit down instantly in the Seat of the Critical, —always very closely contiguous to that of the Scornful.

Of this intellectual and theoretical class of sermons it is not to be anticipated that women will preach many. I should rather say that one of the good things which may be hoped from the introduction of women into the ministry, may prove to be the falling out of fashion of a class of discourses which can only be beneficial or desirable in the case of exceptional mental greatness, combined with a piety warm and powerful enough to hallow every region of thought into which it may pass.

Again, there is an order of thought more practical than this, and surely more suitable to form the sequel of a service of prayer; namely, ideas concerning Duty in all its forms,

religious, social and personal. It is amazing, considering the place which Christianity in every phase assigns to obedience to the will of God, how exceedingly small a space lessons and discussions concerning what *is* that Divine Will, as regards every-day conduct, ever take in Christian instruction. We are eternally exhorted to repent; but what are the sins and failures which ought to be included in our penitence, few preachers take the pains to inform us. We are exhorted to "renounce the Devil and all his works;" but what those "works" may be, as distinguished from works of righteousness in the shop, the camp, the bar, the exchange, the interior of our homes, we are left to find out for ourselves. Sermons treating carefully and thoughtfully any subject of the kind are among the most rare of clerical addresses. Bishop South confesses, indeed, that two-thirds of Christianity is a Christian Temper. But how many times have any of us heard rebuked from the pulpit that odious sullenness which makes the unhappy inmates of the same home with the sulky person live in a perpetual November,—or yet the despotic violence and anger which threaten them like

a perpetual thunder-storm brewing in the distance? What master of a household is told, by the only man who *dare* tell him, that his tyranny, his harshness, perhaps his cruelty, exercised hourly on wife or child or any luckless dependent, make up a sum-total of misery to them and of offence on his part, worse than the results of many a sudden crime, and certainly involving no less guilt? What wife and mother is told that her selfishness, her bickerings, her discontent, her spitefulnesses, are sins for which no prate of high religious feeling or incessant fussing about church-going can possibly atone? And, again, as regards other offences,—let us say, Lying and Dishonesty,—when have we heard wise and just definitions of them from our pastors, or fitting exhortations to nobler standards of veracity and probity than are common in the world? In the upper classes of society, a certain slipshod Rule of Thumb on these subjects is pretty generally received. But where did we learn it? Certainly not when we occupied our seats in church, but rather at the dinner-table, in the playground at school, at the club, or in the drawing-room. Among the lower

ranks, where this traditional code—of Honour rather than of Morality—does not hold equal sway, the ignorance which prevails concerning the very rudimentary principles of Truth and Probity is often no less startling than deplorable. The neglect of the clergy of all denominations to draw clear definitions on these matters of hourly concern, so that their flocks may at least *know* what is right, supposing they are so fortunate as to be able to inspire them with a resolution to *do* it when known, is of a piece with the indifference of all the churches to moral heresies of the most soul-debasing kind, while they punish to the utmost of their powers the faintest divergence from theological orthodoxy.

I cannot but think that if women now enter the pulpit, a great many more sermons will be preached dealing with these points of practical ethics. The concrete and the personal will probably always possess keener interest for the majority of women than the abstract, the vague and the universal; and there is, moreover, if I mistake not, a very distinct superiority in the womanly propensity to translate ideas into action, over the man-of-

the-world habit of admitting high and rigid principles in theory, while practising quite other rules in commerce, politics and social affairs. A very eminent thinker and scholar, a leader of thought at Oxford, once remarked to me with characteristic simplicity: "I do not know how to account for the fact, but I notice that when a good woman is convinced that something is true or right, she tries immediately in some way to square her beliefs and conduct accordingly; whereas when I have, perhaps by infinite labour, succeeded in convincing a man of the same thing, he goes on just as he did before, without altering his behaviour a jot, and as if nothing had happened!" Now I think this practical tendency of the feminine nature (though it will perhaps be less marked hereafter when women submit more generally to the friction of contact with many minds) will inevitably show itself in a preference for the inculcation of definite duties, rather than for the vague declamations about Repentance and Regeneration which so often leave their hearers perfectly undisturbed and on the high way (as they think) to heaven, leading lives of odious selfishness, and com-

bining profit and piety after the fashion of the celebrated grocer, "Sand the sugar, John —and then come in to prayers."

It has been often remarked that the most profound difference between modern and classical civilization lies in the contrast between the value attached by each to private morals. The virtue of the individual was of old treated as altogether subordinate in importance to the interests of the State. In our time we have almost come to recognize that states and churches, nay society itself exist for the sake of building up individual souls to their perfection; and there is every reason to expect that this sense of the supreme importance of morals over every other human concern will rather increase than dwindle through all time to come.

Now it would certainly appear that this *Hebraism*, as Mr. Arnold calls it, is rather characteristic of the higher sort of women. The moment a woman rises above the passion for personal admiration and the struggle for petty social ambition or sordid matrimonial scheming, to which so large a number of unhappy ones are trained and consigned from

girlhood, on the principle of "keeping women in their proper sphere,"—the moment, I say, that a woman has been lifted by education or her natural force of character above all this frivolity and baseness, we almost invariably find in her a degree of earnestness about ethical and ethico-religious questions which is far more rarely traceable among men. It is true that her exclusion from a great many fields of masculine interest naturally centres her thoughts more on such subjects, and that when those exclusions are more or less removed we must expect to see more frequently women absorbed in the same worldly interests as men, and perhaps some who now think night and day of a Ball will be equally eager about a Bill in Parliament. Still, I believe that, independently of circumstances, women have a special tendency (as Renan avers of the Celtic race) to "long after the infinite;" and to yearn to bring an element of sacredness and nobleness into the transactions of daily life such as their moral aspect alone affords. I believe that nine women out of ten (of the better sort, of whom I have spoken) would, if they had the choice, oftener speak of

duty and religion than of any other themes.* If this be so, it would follow that, as time goes on, instead of women falling behind in the progress of humanity, that progress will constantly tend to bring women more to the front as students and expounders of morality.

There is another aspect of this matter also which fairly deserves consideration. Many good Christians have remarked that, while they would fain take Jesus Christ as their

* A curious illustration of this is to be found in a passage in the first series of Mrs. Kemble's charming autobiography published three years ago. She describes the late Lady Byron as often expressing envy of her (Mrs. Kemble's) public readings, and her longing to have similar crowds in sympathy with her own impressions. "I made her laugh," says Mrs. Kemble, "by telling her that more than once, when looking from my reading-desk over the sea of faces uplifted towards me, a sudden feeling had seized me that I must say something *from myself* to all those human beings whose attention I felt at that moment entirely at my command, and between whom and myself a sense of sympathy thrilled powerfully and strangely through my heart as I looked steadfastly at them before opening my lips; but that on wondering afterwards what I might, could, would or should have said to them from myself, I never could think of anything but two words—'*Be good!*'" (P. 317.)

"Great Exemplar," they find nothing in his life indicating what his example would have been in the very closest and most important of human relations of Husband or Father. Surely there is no less reason for women to be conscious of a lacune in their moral instructions when they are received exclusively either from mothers and governesses who may be utterly unfit for such an office, and who often merely pass on traditional moral heresies, or else from masculine pastors whose whole moral parallax is necessarily different from that of a woman, and who practically know next to nothing of the trials, temptations and duties of her lot. We have had of recent years in many of our churches, and notably in St. Paul's Cathedral, courses of sermons addressed by various clergymen to men alone, from which women have been rigidly excluded. Would it be too much to hope that some time or other, in some humble chapel (since no one would dream of devoting the national religious edifices to the exclusive use of women for a single hour), women may enjoy the privilege of being especially addressed

by pastors of their own sex, who may talk to them at once with cultured minds and experienced hearts?

And, lastly, beside the Intellectual and the Moral classes of thoughts to be offered from the pulpit, there is a third—of which, alas! we know far too little—the Spiritual. The store of this latter class of thoughts is probably extremely small even in minds of richest experience. They seem rather to distil slowly in precious drops from the wounds in the tree of life, than to be capable of manufacture by the help of culture and reflection. They are the thoughts which concern the baseness, the loathsomeness, the misery of sin (felt and considered as *Sin*, not as Error or Vice), the glory and beauty and joy of Holiness, felt as *Holiness*, not as Prudence or Virtue. They teach the laws of our spiritual existence; the hygienics of the soul; the "Way towards the Blessed Life." In some sense, sermons which contain thoughts like these may be called Moral Discourses, for they touch the very springs of our moral nature, and send us forth heart-smitten for the past, heart-strengthened with resolutions for the future. They are

the most powerful moral levers which human agency ever applies to our souls. But they are the reverse of didactic, ethical disquisitions, or expositions of the detailed code of virtue. They lie in another region of feeling, and appeal to another class of our faculties than the ratiocinative. We do not sit and judge them, but they come from above and judge us. When they strike us most forcibly, we never feel the temptation (as we are so often inclined to do at the best bits in the critical or the moral discourse) to express our approbation by the familiar tokens of public applause. On the contrary, it is our own breasts we are fain to beat; while, if our lips move, it is to murmur the prayer of the publican.

Will women preach sermons of this order and filled with thoughts like these? It is impossible to foretell with certainty; yet here, if anywhere, may we expect to find the special gifts of women brought out at last from their hidden treasuries. It has been said of almost every great spiritual teacher, that there has been something feminine in his nature, something more of tenderness and purity, more of

insight into and sympathy with others, than belongs to lesser men. In Jesus Christ the ideal characters of both sexes seem almost equally blended. Of course there are other qualities beside the characteristically feminine ones needed to form the highest kind of religious teacher; but the sterner qualities are no more invariably deficient in women than are the softer ones always lacking in men, and it seems the reverse of improbable that women may arise uniting both in hitherto almost unexampled degree.

Let us remember that, after all, the one great Force of the spiritual world, — its correlated Gravitation, Light, Electricity, Magnetism and Vital Force, all in one,—is pure Divine Love. This alone, radiating from the Sun of Love in the heavens, moves and vivifies the soul; and to it alone it responds as the flower to the orb of day—we know not how. The human spirit which receives from on high the largest influx of this divine light and warmth, thereby becomes a focus of reflected power and fervour for all those who can be brought into spiritual contact with it. It is the "love of God shed abroad"

in the heart,—the love of that Goodness which God is, and for which man is made, whose germs even now the illumined eye of love discerns deep-latent in every human soul,—in a word, the Love of God and Love of Man, in whose might all spiritual miracles are done, all leprous souls cleansed, all demon passions cast out, all blind eyes opened, all maimed and crippled faculties made whole. If we could but find the most profoundly-loving, the most unselfishly, nobly, purely-loving of men or women now living upon earth, and set him or her in the midst of us to be our teacher, our friend, our guide into the ways of peace and blessedness, we should have gained a help better than all the philosophers and theologians, the monks and the hermits, could ever give. I will not take on myself to affirm that such most loving heart beats in a woman's breast. It may well be that there are men as tender in feeling as any mother whose spirit ever yearned over her infant's cradle. But there is at least an equal chance of a woman's supremacy, and almost a certainty that, on a secondary level of loving-kindness and unselfishness, we should find many more women

than men. It is quite impossible, I think, that this difference should not make itself felt, and a new impulse be made to flow through all the channels of spiritual life whenever the influence of women may be brought to bear directly and largely on the religious feelings of the community.

Lastly and chiefly. It is a truism to say that the character of our religion depends on our Idea of God; but who has taken note of this familiar fact sufficiently to recognize that all the *traditional* part of that solemn Idea has come to us uniformly in a way deplorably one-sided, and that side the least lovable? I do not over-estimate the importance of *any* idea of God which comes to us through our fellow-men. It seems to me that, from the first dawn of the religious life, the child has a dim sense (apart from his teacher's lessons) of some beneficent and righteous Power around and within him; and that when the Sun rises on any soul in the awful hour which saints have likened to a New Birth, there is obtained, even through all the mists of earth, a direct vision of the ineffable Glory, which evermore causes the words of other mortals, and even

the man's own attempt to render in language his sense of that great Love and Holiness, to seem unreal and worse than inadequate. When *that* stage is reached, it is probably of little consequence what a man's pastor may tell him about God's character. All he says is only like a book which describes a person we ourselves have known, or a place we have visited. Nobody can make the man believe (at least so long as his own living faith and open vision endure) that the Being whom he meets in the hour of prayer is less than All-good, unutterably Holy; even though the dogmas he accepts practically attribute to Him a totally different character. The only injury he can suffer is a negative one; he is denied the help and sympathy which he needs, and which it is the proper office of his minister to supply to him. But at an earlier stage, when all religious experience is yet vague and dim, when faith must of necessity be provisional and taken on trust at secondhand,—at that period there can be no question of the misfortune of receiving cold, hard, narrow notions about God, instilled by teachers who themselves have little love or no direct spiritual

knowledge, and have chiefly borrowed their ideas from the confessedly imperfect rendering, age after age, of other men's experience. How is a young soul ever to turn to God, when God is represented to it as One from whom it would far more naturally turn away? And let it be remembered that the attributes of God which call out the spontaneous love and adoration of the heart are precisely those whose meaning is most completely lost and evaporated in the dry formularies of the intellect, and can never be truly conveyed except by one whose own heart responds to them through all its depths. Power, Wisdom, Justice, are Divine characteristics of which the meaning may be indicated by any teacher with a clear head and command of language. But I disbelieve that any one who is not himself full of love and tenderness has ever, since the world began, yet transmitted to another soul the truth that God is Love.

There is little to wonder at, after all, in the mournful fact, that the religion which as it rose from the heart of Christ was supremely the religion of Divine Love, became, as the centuries went by, colder and harder and more

cruel, till the irony was complete, and the doctrine of the Mount of Galilee was illustrated by the fires of the Spanish Inquisition. *Who*, we may ask, were the teachers of Christianity during the intervening ages? Who were they through whose lips and writings the lessons gathered from the lilies and the sparrows, and the story of the Prodigal, were transmitted to each new-born generation? They were *men* —exclusively men; nay, men who, in taking their office, renounced those ties of natural affection through which the Author of Nature has caused the human heart to grow tender, and to be taught the practice of unselfishness. To fit themselves to convey to the hearts of their brethren the gospel of the Fatherhood of God, they began by renouncing the experience of human fatherhood for themselves. The Apostolic Succession, of which the great churches still boast, was for fifteen centuries a school for the transmission of ideas about a Divine Parent down a long chain of childless celibates. We, Protestants, have corrected this mistake, and the men who tell to *us* the story of the Prodigal are at least able to speak out of the abundance of their hearts when they

say, that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord hath mercy on them that fear Him." But is there not one step even further to be taken? Is not the compassion of "a Mother for the son of her womb" a still profounder image of the Divine Love than the father's pity? Ought it not also to be brought home to our comprehensions (if in any measure human words may so bring it) through the lips of mothers and motherly-hearted women?

The loss out of our religion of all those ideas which may be classed as the doctrine of the Motherhood of God has been attended with evils innumerable. The church of Rome, in obedience to a vehement popular instinct, has sought to make up for the defect by Mariolatry. The orthodox Protestant churches, by sternly adhering to their masculine Trinity, have indeed preserved the awe and moral reverence which the Divine Kingship and Fatherhood demand, and which the paganism of Virgin worship has obliterated. But how much have they not lost by excluding those sentiments which can only be given to One in whom we recognize, not only Justice, Holiness and Beneficence, but also Tenderness, Sympathy, Love?

The truth is, we are so constituted that great benefits received—if we think of them as bestowed merely because it is right and good to give them, and not from love for ourselves,—so far from awakening in us spontaneous emotions of gratitude, have rather an opposite tendency, and seem to lay on us an obligation to be grateful which is a sort of burden, and from which all minds save the most generous have a proclivity to escape. To hundreds of us, large donations from just and well-meaning but unaffectionate fathers have failed to waken the smallest throb of genuine gratefulness; while some mere trifle given by a loving mother—a flower from a well-remembered rose-tree, a scrap of her needlework—has filled our eyes with tears. In excluding, then, in a great degree from view that which I may presume to call the maternal side of religion, the churches, so far as they have done it, have dropped the golden chain whereby human hearts may be drawn; and have kept in their hands the iron one which can only control the reason and the conscience. Is it possible to estimate the amount of loss to religion which this signifies, or how many thousands of souls

might have been won by *love* to a life of piety and holiness who have refused to obey the bit and bridle of sterner motives, and have wandered off and been lost in the wilderness of practical atheism?

If there be, then, as I humbly believe and trust, in the nature of our great Parent above, certain characters of tenderness and sympathy with His creatures which are more perfectly shadowed, more vividly reflected, in the love of human mothers for their children than by aught else on earth, if there be, in short, a real meaning in the old lesson that God created Woman as well as Man in His own image,—the image being only complete in the complete Humanity,—then I think it follows that there is urgent need that woman's idea of God should have its due place in all our teaching of religion. I think that there must be truths in this direction which only a woman's heart will conceive, and only a woman's lips can teach; truths, perchance, which have come to her when baby-fingers have clung round her neck in the dark while infant trust overcame infant terror, and she has asked herself; was there anything in heaven or earth

which could make her cast down to destruction, or even let slip from her clasp of care and guardianship, the helpless little child thus lying in her arms,—a living parable of all our race in the everlasting Arms of God ?

THE HOUSE ON THE SHORE OF ETERNITY.

AN ALLEGORY.

THE HOUSE ON THE SHORE OF ETERNITY.

AN ALLEGORY.

Two simple-minded men who had dwelt all their lives in a country far inland, at last undertook a long journey together. This happened many ages ago, when there were no such things as printed books or village schools, and when the people in isolated districts saw no travellers, and knew nothing of the great world beyond the hills which closed their horizon.

Wolfgang and Athelstane,—so our pilgrims were called,—walked on over downs and heaths, and through the vast forests of oak which then overspread the land, till at last,

after a night's toilsome march, they came, in the early dawn, to a spot which seemed to them the strangest they had ever visited. Walls of rock shut out any distant view, but immediately before them on a gentle declivity there stood a structure, much larger than the humble cottages which Wolfgang and Athelstane had inhabited, and of a singularly different form. Instead of a pointed roof of thatch or tiles, there was, on the top, a flat floor of boards; while beneath, where there should have been a solid, square foundation, there was a long thin wedge, almost like a roof which had been reversed and turned downwards. Also, through the floor, rose up two long slender tree-like erections, with all the branches carefully smoothed away. Cross-bars were slung on these poles, and ropes connected them together, while a great roll of coarse woven stuff, like sackcloth, lay folded up beside them. At one end, and outside of the wooden structure, hung a huge beam, standing, as it seemed, in some unaccountable relation to the rest of the fabric, and connected with it by machinery passing into the interior. All these singular things were slowly and

carefully noted by our two humble travellers as they walked round the wooden building in the morning twilight. No one was near who could afford them an explanation of the use or purpose of what they saw; and their doubts and wonder grew every moment.

"What can it mean?" said Wolfgang. "What did the builder,—whoever he can have been,—intend by such a mansion as this?"

"It is clear enough," answered Athelstane thoughtfully, "that it is the work of some very ingenious hands. How soundly and skilfully it is all fitted together!"

"True," replied his comrade; "and yet ought we to say it is well made before we can tell for what purpose it is constructed? To me it seems that our own old huts of wattled willow and turf were, after all, of a better shape for a house to stand on the ground."

"Do you think this is a House, *only* a House?" said Athelstane, suddenly looking up.

"Well, if it be not a house, what else can it be?" said Wolfgang. "Let us try and look inside of it and examine it more closely."

The two men soon contrived to enter the

edifice which so puzzled them; and presently Wolfgang exclaimed triumphantly:

"See! there can be no question more on the matter. This is only a house. Here are seats and tables for men to sit at, and beds for them to sleep in; and here is a fire-place and a great iron pot to cook food. Now you can have no hesitation. It is just a wooden house, and rather stupidly planned."

"I have no doubt," said Athelstane, "that it is intended for a habitation; but is it not inexplicable that a builder who can work so cleverly should construct it so unsuitably for a common house? Why is it not made to stand squarely and steadily on the ground? What is the sense of these long soaring poles standing up through the middle, with the coils of ropes and bales of sacking? And this? This is the most mysterious thing of all," said Athelstane, placing his hand on a wheel which instantly stirred the great beam at the back.

"They are strange certainly," replied Wolfgang; "very strange and useless things, I should say, about a house which would be much more comfortable and answer its purpose better without them. I cannot agree with

you that the builder was really a clever man, or knew what he was about, else he would never have erected those poles or made that senseless, upside-down roof, instead of a foundation; or, above all, have constructed, that totally unmeaning apparatus behind the whole structure."

"I differ from you," said Athelstane, after some moments more of reflection. "I think it is we who are not clever or ingenious, and who cannot find out what the carpenter who made this building intends to do with it. I do not believe that singular form beneath (so little fit for a building only intended for a house), nor those poles and ropes and vast sheets of woven stuff—nor yet that mysterious great beam—were all added to a mere house for nothing—for no purpose whatever. I think, Wolfgang,"—and Athelstane laid his hand on his friend's arm earnestly,—"I think what we are looking at is something *more than a house.* I think *it is not intended to stand always where we see it.*"

"You are dreaming, Athelstane," said Wolfgang, with a short laugh. "Where on earth should a house go if it is not to stand

always where it is built? Who would want to move such a structure as this?"

"I do not know," said Athelstane, humbly. "I do not profess to understand the mystery of it; only I see that the Master Carpenter who built it must have been a very great carpenter indeed; and I cannot believe that he has made all these things in vain, or for no important purpose. If he wanted only a house, why did he not simply build a house, standing flat on the ground, and with no shafts piercing the air, and no vast guiding beam at the back? Trust me, friend Wolfgang, this is something more than the common abode of which alone you seem able to think."

While the two simple-minded men yet talked together the sun had risen, and there was a sound of many waters and of rising waves, and through an opening in the rocks, which the travellers had not perceived in the twilight, the great ocean became revealed to their eyes. Higher and higher rose the tide till it almost reached where the strange wooden building still lay motionless; and the travellers retreated a little up the shore, and stood, awestruck and breathless, watching

what might happen. Then down from the cliff above ran a band of mariners, and leaped on board the vessel, and hauled in the anchor, and presently the waves lifted up the ship, and she floated bravely on the waters. Very soon the mariners set the sails, which had lain idly on the deck, the pilot placed his hand on the rudder, and guided the noble barque, and she was borne by the winds of heaven, far off beyond the uttermost ken of the two poor travellers upon the shore.

Then, after a time, Wolfgang turned to his companion, and said, "Athelstane, you spoke truth. Yon House-of-the-Sea was made, as you foresaw, for other use than to stand upon the ground. It was planned for a different element—the free world of waters—and now we see what was the purport of so many things which before seemed to us useless—the Keel, the Masts, the Sails, the marvellous and mysterious Rudder. How wonderful it is! How wise and far-seeing the great Carpenter who made the ship!"

As Wolfgang spoke, Athelstane lifted his head, which had drooped in heavy thought, and he saw the wide ocean leaping in the

morning light stretched out before him, and the new-risen sun smote his face with glory. And Athelstane laid his hand on Wolfgang's arm, and spoke as his friend had never heard him speak before, for it was as a man in whose soul a great new thought had sprung to life:—"Aye, Wolfgang, aye," he said; "but if that marvellous work of human hands was not made only for earth, do you think *we* were made for nothing better than the life which now we lead—to eat and drink, and marry, and toil, and sleep, and die, and be forgotten? Are not *we* too, O Wolfgang, made for other things than these? Are we not fitted for some other element than that in which now we have our being?—some other existence than that which yet we lead? If we were intended only to live our few years of animal life on earth and then perish, why were we given minds to plough the seas of thought, and aspirations to point to heaven, and love to swell beneath the breath of affection, and conscience to guide us on our way as the pilot lays on it his mighty hand? O Wolfgang! we could perceive that the ship was intended to float on the great Ocean which we had never beheld.

Can we not see that we and all our race are made to live in a world yet unseen—wider, freer, grander a thousand times than earth—a world which we shall enter whensoever the tide of Death shall lift us up, and bear us away?"

THE PEAK IN DARIEN:

THE RIDDLE OF DEATH.

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THE RIDDLE OF DEATH.

It is somewhat singular that the natural longing to penetrate the great secret of mortality should not have suggested to some of the inquirers into so-called "Spiritual" manifestations, that, before attempting to obtain communication with the *dead*, through such poor methods as raps and alphabets, they might more properly, and with better hope of gaining a glimpse through the "gates ajar," watch closely the *dying*, and study the psychological phenomena which accompany the act of dissolution. Thus, it might be possible to ascertain by comparison of numerous instances, whether among these phenomena are any which seem to indicate that the Mind, Soul, or Self,

of the expiring person, is not undergoing a process of extinction, but exhibiting such tokens as might be anticipated were it entering upon a new phase of existence, and coming into possession of fresh faculties. It is at least conceivable that some such indications might be observed, were we to look for them with care and caution, under the rare conditions wherein they could at any time be afforded; and if this should prove to be the fact, it is needless to dilate on the intense interest of even such semblance of confirmation of our hopes. I must earnestly protest, however, at starting, that, in my opinion, to regard anything which could be so noticed as being *more* than such a confirmation, or, as if it could constitute an argument for belief in a future life, would be foolish in the extreme, seeing the great obscurity and the evanescent nature of all such phenomena. Our faith in Immortality must be built on altogether different ground, if it is to be of any value as a part of our religion, or of our philosophy. But, assuming that we are, individually, already convinced that the quasi-universal creed of the human race is not erroneous, and that "the soul of a

man never dies,"* we may not unreasonably turn to the solemn scene of dissolution, and ask—Whether there does not sometimes occur under one or two perhaps of its hundred forms,

* There is an argument which, I believe, now influences more or less consciously the minds of many intelligent persons against the belief in the Immortal Life. It amounts to this: Granted that there is a God, and that He is absolutely benevolently disposed towards mankind—it does not follow (as commonly assumed) that He will bestow Immortality on man, because *it is quite possible that there may be an inherent absurdity and contradiction in the idea of an Immortal Finite creature,* —it may, in short, be no more within the scope of Divine power to create an Immortal Man, than to make a triangle with the properties of a circle. If we could be first assured that the thing were *possible*, then arguments derived from the justice and goodness of the Deity might be valuable, as affording us ground for believing that He will do that possible thing. But while it remains an open question whether we are not talking actual nonsense when we speak of an ever-living created being, such reflections on the moral attributes of God are beside the mark. No justice or goodness can be involved in doing that which, in the nature of things, is impossible.

Now, of course, there is a little confusion here between a *future* life—a mere *post-mortem* addition of so many years, or centuries, to this mortal existence—and an *immortal life*, which it is assumed will continue either in a series of births and deaths, or in one unbroken life, for ever and ever. In the former idea no one can find

some incidents which point in the direction of the great Fact, which we believe to be actually in process of realization? According to our common conviction, there is a moment of time,

any self-contradiction. It is only the latter notion of immortality, strictly so described, which is suspected of involving a contradiction. Practically, however, the two ideas must stand or fall together, for almost every argument for the survival of the soul after death bears with double force against its extinction at any subsequent epoch of its existence.

Taking then, the Future Life of a man as, to all intents and purposes the Immortal Life, we are bound to confront the difficulty—"What right have we to assume that immortality and creaturehood are compatible the one with the other?"

A priori argument on such a matter is altogether futile. We know and can reason literally nothing about it. For anything we could urge *antecedent to the observation of a man's actual state*, it was, apparently, just as probable that he could not be made immortal, as that he could be made so by any conceivable Power in the universe. But we are not quite in the position of lacking all such *à posteriori* assistance to our judgment. We can see how God has actually constituted the human race, and the problem is consequently modified to this: "Are there any signs or tokens that *Man* is meant for something more than a mere mundane existence?" It is obvious that if Immortality were an attribute, which in the nature of things he could never share, nothing in his mental or moral constitution would have been made with any reference to such an unattainable destiny. If,

when the Man whom we have known in his garb of flesh, casts it aside, actually, so to speak, before our eyes, and "this mortal puts on immortality." As in Blanco White's

on the other hand, there be in his nature evidences of a purpose extending beyond the scope of this life, and stretching out into the limitless perspective of eternity, then we are authorized to draw the inference that the Author of his being planned for him a future existence, and, of course, knew that he might enjoy that divine heritage.

Here, then, the argument lies in manageable shape before us. It is true we only see a small portion of humanity, as it has yet been drawn out; but just as mathematicians can determine, from any three given points, the nature of the curve to which they belong, so we have enough indications to guide us to a conclusion respecting the character of our race. In every department of our nature, save our perishable bodies, we find something, which seems to point beyond our threescore years and ten — something inconsistent with the hypothesis that those years complete our intended existence. Our busy Intellects, persistently wrestling with the mysteries of eternity; our human affections craving for undying love; our sense of Justice—born of no past experience of a reign of Astrea, but resolutely prophesying, *in spite* of experience, a perfect judgment hereafter; the measureless meaning which moral distinctions carry to our consciences; the unutterable longing of our spirits for union (not wholly unattained even here) with the living God, the Father of spirits; —all these things seem to show that we are built, so to

beautiful sonnet he is, like Adam, watching his first sunset, and trembling to lose sight of the world, and the question to be solved is—Whether darkness has enshrouded him, or, whether—

> "Hesperus with the hosts of Heaven came,
> And lo! Creation widened in his view?"

and he may have asked himself—

> "Who would have thought such darkness lay concealed
> Within thy beams, O Sun? or deemed,
> While flower, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
> That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?"

and Life, like Light, had been only a deception and a veil.

We have walked in company with our brother, perchance for years, through the "wilderness of this world," over its arid plains of toil, and through its sweet valleys of love and pleasure; and then we have begun to

speak, on a larger scale than that of our earthly life. The foundations are too deep and wide, the corner-stones are by far too massive, if nothing but the Tabernacle of a day be the design of the Architect. In brief, then, we may admit freely that, for aught we know, "God could not give to a triangle the properties of a circle;" and yet, nevertheless, hold our faith undisturbed, since we find that the line which His hand has actually drawn *is a* CURVE *already*—a few degrees of the circumference of a stupendous circle.

climb the awful Andes which have always loomed before us at our journey's end—their summits against the sky, and beyond them—the Undiscovered Land. Onward, a little before us, as chance may decide, our companion perhaps mounts the last acclivity, and we see him slowly approach the mountain's crown, while our lagging steps yet linger on the slopes below. Sometimes, ere he reach the hill-top, he is enveloped in cloud, and then we see him no more; but again, sometimes, he remains in the full sunlight, and, though distant from us, and beyond the reach of our voice, it is yet possible for us to watch his attitude and motions. Now we see him nearing the summit. A few steps more, and there must break on his vision whatever there may be of the unknown World beyond; a howling wilderness, or a great Pacific of joy. Does he seem, as that view bursts on him—whatsoever it may be—does he seem to be inspired with hope, or cast down with despair? Do his arms drop in consternation, or does he lift them aloft with one glad gesture of rapture, ere he descend the further slope, and is lost to our sight for ever?

It appears to me that we may, though with much diffidence, answer this question as regards some of our comrades in Life's journey, who have gone before us, and of whom the last glimpse has been one full of strange, mysterious, but most joyful promise. Let us inquire into the matter calmly, making due allowance both for natural exaggeration of mourning friends, who recall the most affecting scenes, and also for the probable presence of cerebral disturbance and hallucination at the moment of physical dissolution.

Of course, it is quite possible that the natural law of death may be that the departed always sink into a state of unconsciousness, and rather dip beneath a Lethe than leap a Rubicon. It is likewise possible that the faculties of a disembodied soul, whatever that may be, may need time and use, like those of an infant, before they can be practically employed. But there is also at least a *possibility* that consciousness is not always lost, but is continuous through the passage from one life to another, and that it expands, rather than closes, at the moment when the bonds of the flesh are broken, and the man

enters into possession of his higher powers and vaster faculties symbolled by the beautiful old emblem of Psyche's emancipated butterfly quitting the shell of the chrysalis.* In this latter case there is a certain *primâ facie* presumption that close observation ought to permit us occasionally to obtain some brief glimpse, some glance, though but of lightning swiftness and evanescence, revealing partially this transcendent change.

In a majority of deaths the accompanying physical conditions hide from the spectators

* There is an insect, the Lunar Sphinx Moth, which exhibits, in its first stage, not only the usual prevision for its security while in the helpless chrysalis state, but a singular foresight of its own requirements when it shall have become a winged moth. Having made, by eating its way *upward* through the pith of a willow, an appropriate hiding-place, it finds itself with its head in a position in which, were it to become a moth, it could never push itself down, and escape at the aperture below. The little creature accordingly, before it goes to sleep, laboriously turns round, and places its head near the entrance, where, as a moth, it will make its happy exit into the fields of air. There seems something curiously akin in the unaccountable foresight of this insect, of a state of existence it has never experienced, and the vague and dim sentiment of immortality, common to mankind since the days of the cave-dwellers of the Stone Age.

whatever psychological phenomena may be taking place. The sun of our poor human life mostly sets behind an impenetrable cloud. Of all forms of death the commonest appears to be the awful "agony," with its unconscious groans and stertorous breath. The dying person seems to sink lower and lower, as if beneath the waters of an unfathomable sea; a word, a motion, a glance, rising up at longer and longer intervals, till the last slow and distant sighs terminate the woeful strife, and the victory of Death is complete. When this is the mode of dissolution it is of course hopeless to look for any indication of the fate of the soul at its exodus; and the same holds good as regards death in extreme old age, or after exhausting disease, when the sufferer very literally "falls asleep." Again, there are deaths which are accompanied by great pain, or delirium, or which are caused by sudden accidents, altogether hiding from our observation the mental condition of the patient. Only in a small residue of cases the bodily conditions are such as to cause neither interference with, nor yet concealment of, the process of calm and peaceful dissolution, in

the full light of mental sanity; and it is to these only we can look with any hope of fruitful observation. I ask—Whether in such cases instances have ever been known of occurrences having any significance, taken in connection with the solemn event wherewith they are associated? Does our forerunner on the hill-top show by his looks and actions—since he is too far off to speak to us—that he beholds from his "Peak in Darien," an Ocean yet hidden from our view?

I should hesitate altogether to affirm positively that such is the case; but, after many inquiries on the subject, I am still more disinclined to assert the contrary. The truth seems to be that in almost every family or circle, a question will elicit recollections of death-bed scenes, wherein, with singular recurrence, appears one very significant incident—namely, that the dying person, precisely at the moment of death, and when the power of speech was lost, or nearly lost, seemed *to see something;* or rather, to speak more exactly, to become conscious of something present (for actual sight is out of question)—of a very striking kind, which remained

invisible to and unperceived by the assistants. Again and again this incident is repeated. It is described almost in the same words by persons who have never heard of similar occurrences, and who suppose their own experience to be unique, and have raised no theory upon it, but merely consider it to be "strange," "curious," "affecting," and nothing more. It is invariably explained, that the dying person is lying quietly, when suddenly, in the very act of expiring, he looks up—sometimes starts up in bed—and gazes on (what appears to be) vacancy, with an expression of astonishment, sometimes developing instantly into joy, and sometimes cut short in the first emotion of solemn wonder and awe. If the dying man were to see some utterly-unexpected but instantly-recognized vision, causing him a great surprise, or rapturous joy, his face could not better reveal the fact. The very instant this phenomenon occurs, Death is actually taking place, and the eyes glaze even while they gaze at the unknown sight. If a breath or two still heave the chest, it is obvious that the soul has already departed.

A few narrations of such observations,

chosen from a great number which have been communicated to the writer, will serve to show more exactly the point which it is desired should be established by a larger concurrence of testimony. The following are given in the words of a friend on whose accuracy every reliance may be placed:—

"I have heard numberless instances of dying persons showing unmistakably by their gestures, and sometimes by their words, that they saw in the moment of dissolution what could not be seen by those around them. On three occasions facts of this nature came distinctly within my own knowledge, and I will therefore limit myself to a detail of that which I can give on my own authority, although the circumstances were not so striking as many others known to me, which I believe to be equally true.

"I was watching one night beside a poor man dying of consumption; his case was hopeless, but there was no appearance of the end being very near; he was in full possession of his senses, able to talk with a strong voice and not in the least drowsy. He had slept through the day and was so wakeful that I

had been conversing with him on ordinary subjects to while away the long hours. Suddenly, while we were thus talking quietly together, he became silent, and fixed his eyes on one particular spot in the room, which was entirely vacant, even of furniture; at the same time a look of the greatest delight changed the whole expression of his face, and after a moment of what seemed to be intense scrutiny of some object invisible to me, he said to me in a joyous tone, 'There is Jim.' Jim was a little son whom he had lost the year before, and whom I had known well, but the dying man had a son still living, named John, for whom we had sent, and I concluded it was of John he was speaking, and that he thought he heard him arriving; so I answered,

"'No. John has not been able to come.'

"The man turned to me impatiently and said, 'I do not mean John, I know he is not here, it is Jim, my little lame Jim; surely you remember him?'

"'Yes,' I said, 'I remember dear little Jim who died last year, quite well.'

"'Don't you see him then? There he is,'

said the man, pointing to the vacant space on which his eyes were fixed; and when I did not answer, he repeated almost fretfully, 'Don't you see him standing there?'

"I answered that I could not see him, though I felt perfectly convinced that something was visible to the sick man, which I could not perceive. When I gave him this answer he seemed quite amazed, and turned round to look at me with a glance almost of indignation. As his eyes met mine, I saw that a film seemed to pass over them, the light of intelligence died away, he gave a gentle sigh and expired. He did not live five minutes from the time he first said, 'There is Jim,' although there had been no sign of approaching death previous to that moment.

"The second case was that of a boy about fourteen years of age, dying also of decline. He was a refined, highly educated child, who throughout his long illness had looked forward with much hope and longing to the unknown life to which he believed he was hastening. On a bright summer morning it became evident that he had reached his last hour. He lost the power of speech, chiefly from

weakness, but he was perfectly sensible, and made his wishes known to us by his intelligent looks. He was sitting propped up in bed, and had been looking rather sadly at the bright sunshine playing on the trees outside his open window for some time. He had turned away from this scene, however, and was facing the end of the room, where there was nothing whatever but a closed door, when all in a moment the whole expression of his face changed to one of the most wondering rapture, which made his half-closed eyes open to their utmost extent, while his lips parted with a smile of perfect ecstasy; it was impossible to doubt that some glorious sight was visible to him, and from the movement of his eyes it was plain that it was not one but many objects on which he gazed, for his look passed slowly from end to end of what seemed to be the vacant wall before him, going back and forward with ever-increasing delight manifested in his whole aspect. His mother then asked him if what he saw was some wonderful sight beyond the confines of this world, to give her a token that it was so, by pressing her hand. He at once took her hand, and

pressed it meaningly, giving thereby an intelligent affirmative to her question, though unable to speak. As he did so a change passed over his face, his eyes closed, and in a few minutes he was gone.

"The third case, which was that of my own brother, was very similar to this last. He was an elderly man, dying of a painful disease, but one which never for a moment obscured his faculties. Although it was known to be incurable, he had been told that he might live some months, when somewhat suddenly the summons came on a dark January morning. It had been seen in the course of the night that he was sinking, but for some time he had been perfectly silent and motionless, apparently in a state of stupor; his eyes closed and his breathing scarcely perceptible. As the tardy dawn of the winter morning revealed the rigid features of the countenance from which life and intelligence seemed to have quite departed, those who watched him felt uncertain whether he still lived; but suddenly, while they bent over him to ascertain the truth, he opened his eyes wide, and gazed eagerly upward with

such an unmistakable expression of wonder and joy, that a thrill of awe passed through all who witnessed it. His whole face grew bright with a strange gladness, while the eloquent eyes seemed literally to shine as if reflecting some light on which they gazed; he remained in this attitude of delighted surprise for some minutes, then in a moment the eyelids fell, the head drooped forward, and with one long breath the spirit departed."

A different kind of case to those above narrated by my friend was that of a young girl known to me, who had passed through the miserable experiences of a sinful life at Aldershot, and then had tried to drown herself in the river Avon, near Clifton. She was in some way saved from suicide, and placed for a time in a penitentiary; but her health was found to be hopelessly ruined, and she was sent to die in the quaint old workhouse of St. Peter's at Bristol. For many months she lay in the infirmary literally perishing piecemeal of disease, but exhibiting patience and sweetness of disposition quite

wonderful to witness. She was only eighteen, poor young creature! when all her little round of error and pain had been run; and her innocent, pretty face might have been that of a child. She never used any sort of cant (so common among women who have been in Refuges), but had apparently somehow got hold of a very living and real religion, which gave her comfort and courage, and inspired her with the beautiful spirit with which she bore her frightful sufferings. On the wall opposite her bed I had hung by chance a print of the "Lost Sheep," and Mary S——, looking at it one day, said to me, "That is just what I was, and what happened to me; but I am being brought safe home now." For a long time before her death, her weakness was such that she was quite incapable of lifting herself up in bed, or of supporting herself when lifted, and she, of course, continued to lie with her head on the pillow while life gradually and painfully ebbed away, and she seemingly became nearly unconscious. In this state she had been left one Saturday night by the nurse in attendance. Early at dawn next morning —an Easter morning, as it chanced—the poor

old women who occupied the other beds in the ward were startled from their sleep by seeing Mary S—— suddenly spring up to a sitting posture in her bed, with her arms outstretched and her face raised, as if in a perfect rapture of joy and welcome. The next instant the body of the poor girl fell back a corpse. Her death had taken place in that moment of mysterious ecstasy.

A totally different case again was told me by the daughter of a man of high intellectual distinction, well-known in the world of letters. When dying peacefully, as became the close of a profoundly religious life, he was observed by his daughter suddenly to look up as if at some spectacle invisible to those around, with an expression of solemn surprise and awe, very characteristic, it is said, of his habitual frame of mind. At that instant, and before the look had time to falter or change, the shadow of death passed over his face, and the end had come.

In yet another case I am told that at the last moment so bright a light seemed suddenly to shine from the face of a dying man, that the clergyman and another friend who were

attending him actually turned simultaneously to the window to seek for the cause.

Another incident of a very striking character was described as having occurred in a family, united very closely by affection. A dying lady, exhibiting the aspect of joyful surprise to which we have so often referred, spoke of seeing, one after another, three of her brothers who had long been dead, and then apparently recognized last of all a fourth brother, who was believed by the bystanders to be still living in India. The coupling of his name with that of his dead brothers excited such awe and horror in the mind of one of the persons present, that she rushed from the room. In due course of time letters were received announcing the death of the brother in India, which had occurred some time before his dying sister seemed to recognize him.

Again, in another case a gentleman who had lost his only son some years previously, and who had never recovered the afflicting event, exclaimed suddenly when dying, with the air of a man making a most rapturous discovery, "I see him! I see him!"

Not to multiply such anecdotes too far—

anecdotes which certainly possess a uniformity pointing to some similar cause, whether that cause be physiological or psychical—I will now conclude with one authenticated by a near relative of the persons concerned. A late colonial bishop was commonly called by his sisters "Charlie," and his eldest sister bore the pet name of "Liz." They had both been dead for some years, when their younger sister, Mrs. W——, also died, but before her death appeared to behold them both. While lying still and apparently unconscious, she suddenly opened her eyes and looked earnestly across the room, as if she saw some one entering. Presently, as if overjoyed, she exclaimed, "O Charlie!" and then, after a moment's pause, with a new start of delight, as if he had been joined by some one else, she went on, "And Liz!" and then added, "How beautiful you are!" After seeming to gaze at the two beloved forms for a few minutes, she fell back on her pillow and died.

An instance,—in many respects specially noteworthy,—of a similar *impression* of the presence of the dead conveyed through another sense besides sight, is recorded in Caroline

Fox's charming "Journals," Vol. II, p. 247. She notes under date September 5th, 1856, as follows:—

"M. A. Schimmelpenninck is gone. She said just before her death, 'Oh, I hear such beautiful voices, and the children's are the loudest.'"

Can any old Italian picture of the ascending Madonna, with the cloud of cherub heads forming a glory of welcome around her as she enters the higher world, be more significant than this actual fact—so simply told—of a saintly woman in dying hearing "*beautiful voices, and the children's the loudest?*" Of course, like all the rest it may have been only a physiological phenomenon, a purely subjective impression; but it is at least remarkable that a second sense should thus be under the same glamour,—and that again, we have to confront, in the case of *hearing* as of *sight*, the anomaly of the (real or supposed) presence of the beautiful and the delightful, instead of the terrible and the frightful, while Nature is in the pangs of dissolution. Does the brain, then, unlike every known instrument, give forth its sweetest music as its chords are breaking?

Instances like those, recorded in this paper, might, I believe, be almost indefinitely multiplied were attention directed to them, and the experience of survivors more generally communicated and recorded. Reviewing them, the question seems to press upon us, Why should we *not* thus catch a glimpse of the spiritual world through that half-open portal wherein our dying brother is passing? If the soul of man exist at all after the extinction of the life of the body, what is more probable than that it should begin, at the very instant when the veil of the flesh is dropping off, to exercise those spiritual powers of perception, which we must suppose it to possess (else were its whole after life a blank), and to become conscious of other things than those of which our dim senses can take cognizance? If it be not destined to an eternity of solitude (an absurd hypothesis), its future companions may well be recognized at once, even as it goes forth to meet them. It seems indeed almost a thing to be expected, that some of them should be ready waiting to welcome it on the threshold. Is there not, then, a little margin for hope—if not for any confident

belief—that our fondest anticipations will be verified; nay, that the actual experience of many has already verified them? May it not be that when that hour comes for each of us which we have been wont to dread as one of parting and sorrow—

> "The last long farewell on the shore
> Of this rude world,"

ere we "put off into the unknown dark," we may find that we only leave, for a little time, the friends of earth, to go straight to the embrace of those who have long been waiting for us to make perfect for them the nobler life beyond the grave? May it not be that our very first dawning sense of that enfranchised existence will be the rapture of reunion with the beloved ones, whom we have mourned as lost, but who have been standing near, waiting longingly for our recognition, as a mother may watch beside the bed of a fever-stricken child till reason re-illumines its eyes and with outstretched arms it cries "Mother?"

There are doubtless some to whom it would be very dreadful to think of thus meeting on the threshold of eternity, the wronged, the

deceived, the forsaken. But for most of us, God be thanked, no dream of celestial glory, has half the ecstasy of the thought that in dying we may meet,—and *meet at once*, before we have had a moment to feel the awful loneliness of death,—the parent, wife, husband, child, friend of our life, soul of our soul, whom we consigned long ago with breaking hearts to the grave. Their "beautiful" forms (as that dying lady beheld her brother and sister) entering our chamber, standing beside our bed of death, and come to rejoin us for ever—what words can describe the happiness of such a vision? It *may* be awaiting us all. There is even, perhaps, a certain probability that it is actually the natural destiny of the human soul, and that the affections, which alone of earthly things can survive dissolution will, like magnets, draw the beloved and loving spirits of the dead around the dying. I can see no reason why we should not indulge so ineffably blessed a hope. But, even if it be a dream, the faith remains, built on no such evanescent and shadowy, foundation, that there is One Friend,—and He the best—in whose arms we shall surely fall asleep, and to

whose love we may trust for the re-union, sooner or later, of the severed links of sacred human affection.

THE END.

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